Bengaluru Wednesday, March 18, 2026 Pages 18 Vol 79 No 77 ₹7

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Page 14

Israel: Iran security chief Larijani killed

Tehran yet to confirm death; paramilitary head also dead

TEHRAN, AFP

Israel said on Tuesday it had killed Iran's powerful national security chief, Ali Larijani, in what would be a huge blow to the Islamic republic more than two weeks into the war engulfing the Middle East.

Ali Larijani

Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said Larijani was "eliminated last night", although this has not been confirmed by Iran.

It comes less than three weeks after US-Israeli strikes on February 28 killed Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader since 1989, triggering a regional war with global repercussions.

Larijani (68), has been described as a "true insider" in Iran, close to the late ayatollah and central to the republic's nuclear policy and strategic diplomacy over decades.

▸ Iran, Page 7

CROSS FIRE

- Falling debris from missile kills one in Abu Dhabi
- Fujairah also hit on Tuesday morning, sparking a fire
- Israel carries out new strikes on Beirut's southern suburbs
- Drone, rocket attack targets US embassy in Baghdad on Tuesday

The site of an Israeli airstrike in Beirut on Tuesday. AP/PTI

No truce, says Supreme Leader

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei has rejected proposals for reducing tensions or for a ceasefire with the United States that were conveyed to Tehran by two intermediary countries, a senior Iranian official said on Tuesday.

Joe Kent, US counterterror head, quits

Joe Kent, the director of the National Counterterrorism Centre, announced his resignation, saying he "cannot in good conscience" back the war in Iran.

Details on Page 13

LPG: Reply by March 23, HC tells Centre, state P3B

Around 11 million graduates unemployed: Report

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Nearly half of the unemployed in the age group of 15-29 years are graduates, as expansion in the country's higher education institutions has not been matched by the commensurate growth in employment opportunities, shows a report released by Azim Premji University on Tuesday.

The report underlined that India's demographic dividend is nearing its peak as the country's working-age population share will begin declining after 2030. "The pace of job creation in the coming decades is critical to ensure that the demographic dividend translates into an economic one," the report said.

> The pace of job creation in the coming decades is critical to ensure that the demographic dividend translates into an economic one.
> **Azim Premji University Report**

The report titled 'State of Working India', noted that out of 63 million (6.3 crore) graduates in the age group of 20 to 29 years as of 2023, around 11 million (1.1 crore) were unemployed.

Around 40% of graduates in the labour force report open unemployment. However, this is not a new phenomenon - between 1983 and 2023, graduate unemployment rates have remained more or less unchanged between 35 and 40%.

"The problem of graduate unemployment has been magnified in recent years owing to the growing size of the graduate population. In the last few decades, the youth population has grown substantially. So has the tertiary enrolment rate, resulting in an increase in the absolute number of young graduates," the report said.

Between 2004-05 and 2023, while approximately 5 million graduates were added each year, only around 2.8 million found employment.

▸ Unemployed, Page 7

SC: Can't deny maternity leave over adoptive kid's age

Junks provision denying benefit to mom of child above 3 months

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

AGE NO BAR

- Court says motherhood is not merely a biological function but a deeply personal and emotional experience
- Women who adopt a child aged three months or above are similarly situated to women who adopt a child below the age of three months
- By the time the child is declared free for adoption, the child is unlikely to be less than three months old

Holding that adoption is a part of reproductive and decisional autonomy, the Supreme Court on Tuesday struck down the provision which stated that a woman would be eligible for maternity leave if she legally adopted a child below the age of three months.

A bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan said Section 60(4) of the Code on Social Security, 2020, when it puts a limit of three months on the age of the adoptive child for adoptive mothers to avail maternity benefit, violates Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution.

The court said motherhood is not merely a biological function but a deeply personal and emotional experience.

"It is a right rooted in the freedom to love, nurture and raise a child with dignity and devotion. Parenthood is defined by care and responsibility rather than by physical act of giving birth alone, even more so for women who choose to embrace motherhood by adopting a child overcoming social, emotional and institutional barriers," the bench said.

The court said the distinction drawn by sub-section (4) of Section 60 between an adoptive and a biological mother does not have a rational nexus with the object of the 2020 Code.

"The object of maternity benefit is not associated with the process of childbirth but with the process of motherhood. Women who adopt a child aged three months or above are similarly situated to women who adopt a child below the age of three months," Justice Pardiwala wrote for bench.

▸ Maternity, Page 7

Afghanistan: 400 killed in Pak strike

KABUL, AFP: The Afghanistan government on Tuesday said that about 400 people were killed in a Pakistani air strike on a drug rehabilitation centre in Kabul. Hundreds more were said to have been wounded at the facility that was hit on Monday night.

Details on Page 13

Shipping & LPG crises cripple B'luru MSMEs

ASHWIN BM
BENGALURU, DHNS

WAR SHOCKS

The ongoing global shipping crisis and a critical shortage of LPG are pushing micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the Peenya Industrial Area towards an operational crisis.

Many manufacturers of automotive parts stated that shipping components to Europe, which typically took between 33 and 35 days, will now take 56 to 60 days.

This will likely hit global giants like Volvo and Stellantis, who depend on the Peenya Industrial Area for automotive parts.

Several heat-treatment plants, which are essential for hardening automotive parts, are also facing issues.

"Without heat treatment, further machining is impossible," one of the manufacturers told *DH*.

For automotive component manufacturers, the primary headache is the skyrocketing lead time.

Lead time specifically refers to the time elapsed from placing an order to receiving the final product or service.

▸ MSMEs, Page 7

Hailstorm turns Machapur into 'mini Kashmir'

KALGHATGI, DHNS: Heaps of hailstones covered the Kalghatgi–Mundgod highway near Machapur in Kalghatgi taluk of Dharwad district on Tuesday. In rural areas, people were seen collecting hailstones and clicking photographs, revelling in the rare weather event.

Details on Page 3B

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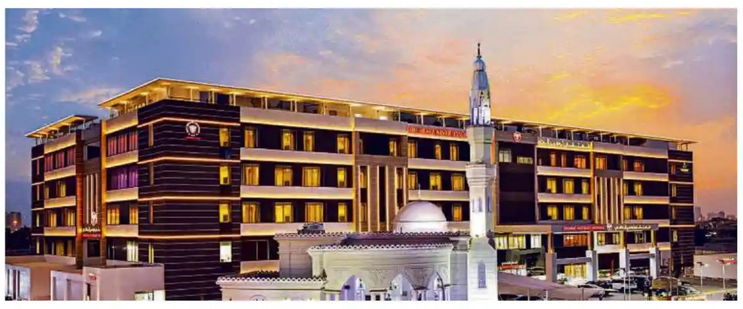

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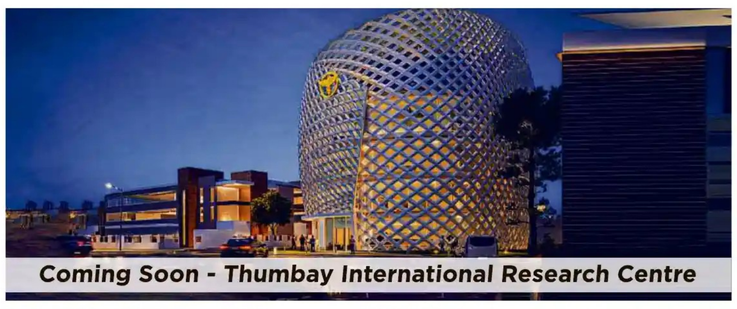

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UV levels spike in Bengaluru, health risk alert

UVI stays in 'extremely high' zone, says experts

AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

Bengaluru's ultraviolet index (UVI) has remained between 10 and 13 over the past week — levels classified as "extremely high", according to weather data.

The UVI measures the intensity of the sun's ultraviolet radiation at a given place and time. Doctors warn that such high exposure can lead to sunburn, weakened immunity and heat-related illnesses, including heat exhaustion and heatstroke. Outdoor workers such as traffic police and construction labourers, the elderly, and those with chronic conditions are particularly vulnerable.

"Prolonged exposure to intense UV radiation, especially when combined with heat and dehydration, can lead to multiple health issues, including electrolyte imbalance, dizziness, eye strain and, in severe cases, heart and respiratory problems," said Dr G Nasiruddin, Consultant in Internal Medicine.

He added that continuous exposure could also cause photokeratitis (eye inflammation), reduced immunity, and life-threatening heatstroke, if untreated.

Highlighting skin-related risks, Dr Sudheendra Udbalker, Senior Consultant in Dermatology, said high UV exposure can damage the skin within a short duration, particularly between late morning and mid-afternoon.

"Repeated exposure without protection can cause tanning, sunburn, irritation and dehydration, and over time, increase the risk of premature ageing, pigmentation, sun allergy, and even skin cancer," he said.

Dr Shireen Furtado, Senior Consultant in Medical and Cosmetic Dermatology, advised using sunscreen with at least SPF 30, preferably SPF 50, applying it generously and reapplying every two hours, especially after sweating.

Doctors also stressed the need for UV alerts to be included in daily weather bulletins, noting that radiation levels can remain high even when the weather feels pleasant.

At a glance

- **UVI levels:** 10–13 (extremely high).
- **Peak hours:** Late morning to mid-afternoon.
- **Key risks:** Sunburn, dehydration, heat exhaustion, heatstroke.
- **Also linked to:** Eye damage, weakened immunity, skin issues.
- **Most vulnerable:** Outdoor workers, elderly, people with chronic illness.
- **Skin impact:** Quick damage, long-term risk of pigmentation, ageing, cancer.
- **Protection:** SPF 30–50 sunscreen, reapply every 2 hours.
- **Expert advice:** Include UV alerts in daily weather updates

UGADI BUZZ

People shop for Panchanga (Hindu almanac), fruits, vegetables and other festival essentials at KR Market in Bengaluru on Tuesday. DH PHOTOS/RANJU P & PUSHKAR V

BAF urges govt to scrap Rs 12/kg fee for bulk waste generators

Says charge is 600% higher than independent houses

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Bangalore Apartments' Federation (BAF) on Tuesday raised strong objections to the revised solid waste management charges for bulk waste generators, calling the fee "discriminatory" and financially burdensome.

It urged the government to immediately withdraw the new fee structure, which it said is nearly 600% more than what residents in independent houses pay.

Addressing the media, BAF said the Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML) has started sending notices to apartment complexes with more than 100 units to pay Rs 12 per kg of waste.

"The fee is significantly higher than those levied on independent houses," Satish Mallya, president of BAF, said.

BAF said that while an independent house under 2,000 sqft pays a nominal Rs 100 per month through property tax, apartment residents are now being charged Rs 12 per kg of waste.

"With an added 18% GST, this translates to roughly Rs 360 per flat per month, which is a staggering 600% increase in waste disposal costs," the federation said.

For large apartment complexes, the impact is substantial. "A 500-unit residential complex could end up paying several lakhs of rupees every month towards waste management," it pointed out.

Calling the pricing structure inequitable, BAF leaders said the burden disproportionately affects apartment dwellers despite their longstanding compliance with sustainable waste practices.

"Most apartment communities have implemented in-situ wet waste processing and source segregation for years," the federation said. "Punishing us with exorbitant fees and treating families in flats different from those in independent houses is severe discrimination."

BAF has suggested immediate measures, including abolishing direct vendor payments, introducing a compost buyback system, and mandating transparent consultations with apartment associations before implementing any pricing changes.

BAF leaders Pradeep Pai, K Arun Kumar and Vishwa Venkata Reddy were present at the press conference.

Federation asks govt to enact new apartment legislation

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bangalore Apartments Federation (BAF) has urged the state government to pass the long-pending Karnataka Apartment Ownership and Management Act (KAOMA) 2025 during the ongoing budget session.

Addressing a press conference on Tuesday, BAF office-bearers expressed disappointment that the draft law — meant to replace the Karnataka Apartment Ownership Act, 1972 — has not yet been tabled, despite being ready since July 2025.

Members of the Bangalore Apartments Federation (BAF) at a press conference on Tuesday. DH PHOTO/BK JANARDHAN

The federation noted that Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar had assured the Legislative Assembly two years ago that a new law would be introduced.

"There has been no progress in moving the Bill forward," said BAF president Satish Mallya.

"Residents are struggling to manage their communities without a clear and updated legal framework," he said.

BNP flags 'discrepancies' in GBA draft electoral rolls

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Bengaluru NavaNirmana Party (BNP) has flagged what it termed "large-scale discrepancies" in the draft electoral rolls published by the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) ahead of the civic body polls.

Srikanth Narasimhan

The party submitted its preliminary findings to GBA Chief Commissioner M Maheshwar Rao and Bengaluru South Corporation Commissioner KN Ramesh on Tuesday.

According to the BNP, its analysis across select wards revealed multiple errors, including duplicate entries, voters mapped to incorrect wards, and names missing entirely from the rolls.

In apartment complexes such as SJR Bluewaters and Bluebells in Naganathapura near Hosa Road, several entries appeared duplicated or inconsistently mapped across ward boundaries.

BNP leaders also raised concerns over ward-wise accuracy, noting that residents from areas such as Subhash Nagar and Vittasandra may have been wrongly included in the Chikkathoguru rolls despite falling under other jurisdictions.

Similarly, in Naganathapura, voters from GK Layout — geographically part of Chikkathoguru — were found listed in a different ward.

The report also flagged complaints from residents across the city whose names were missing from the rolls despite having valid EPIC numbers and residing within the GBA limits.

BNP founder and general secretary Srikanth Narasimhan said a comprehensive report would be released in the coming weeks.

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DIGITAL PAYMENT ACCEPTED

Summer demand: 50 more tankers for Sanchari Cauvery

SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) is ramping up its Sanchari Cauvery service to meet a likely surge in water demand this summer.

The board has added 50 new tankers, effectively doubling its fleet. In addition, nearly 100 private tankers are registered with the BWSSB to handle bookings.

The expansion follows an internal assessment that found the East Zone alone required at least 39 additional tankers, with an overall need for 117.

Officials said the move is also aimed at reducing dependence on private tanker operators. "Tankers have become inevitable in Bengaluru. Through Sanchari Cauvery, we are trying to reduce reliance on private supply. Having our own fleet also improves efficiency in meeting demand," a senior BWSSB official said.

Unlike private operators that largely draw groundwater, the Sanchari Cauvery initiative supplies Cauvery water through tankers, helping curb groundwater exploitation.

"Private tankers typically extract water from borewells. Unregulated extraction has led to a decline in groundwater levels in several areas," the official added.

The service gains significance during summer, when many borewells run dry, forcing residents, especially in apartment complexes and peripheral areas, to depend on tanker water.

Over the past 10 months, Sanchari Cauvery has fulfilled 42,738 orders, supplying more than 181 million litres of water. The East Zone alone accounted for 25,345 orders, totalling 111 million litres.

The service is accessible via a mobile app and web platform, allowing users to book tankers, choose capacity, track deliveries in real time, make online payments, and access driver details.

Residents gather to collect water from a tanker. DH FILE PHOTO

Orders received & water dispatched in 10 months

- **East:** 25,345 orders; 111.428 million litres
- **South:** 9,933 orders; 44.617 million litres
- **West:** 2,123 orders; 9.533 million litres
- **North:** 5,337 orders; 16.073 million litres
- **Total:** 42,738 orders; 181.651 million litres

MOBILITY BOOST

E-bikes rolled out for ASHA workers under Arogya Sanchari

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Health and Family Welfare Department on Tuesday distributed electric bikes to ASHA workers under the Arogya Sanchari initiative.

In the first phase, 69 e-bikes will be provided to selected Primary Health Centres (PHCs) in Tumakuru, Bengaluru South (Ramanagara), areas under the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) limits, and Bengaluru Urban.

The implementing organisations have indicated plans to expand the initiative to other districts in phases.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao said the initiative aims to strengthen healthcare delivery in rural and peri-urban areas. "Under a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, electric bikes are being provided to PHCs in collaboration with United Way Bengaluru (UWBe) and Healthium Medtech," he said.

He added that the two-wheelers would help take healthcare services to people's doorsteps. "Our vision is to ensure healthcare reaches every household, not just hospitals," Rao said.

Highlighting the challenges faced by frontline workers, he said ASHA workers and primary health staff often struggle with transportation while covering remote villages and hamlets. "With these e-bikes, they will be able to reach people on time and provide timely care and guidance," he said.

Helmets, water bottles and raincoats were also distributed along with the bikes.

Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao distributes electric bikes to ASHA workers in Bengaluru on Tuesday.

Court allows Darshan to meet family in jail

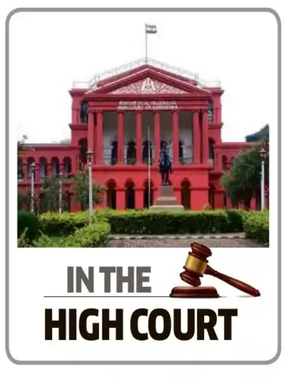
BENGALURU, DHNS: A city court has permitted Kannada film actor Darshan Thoogudeepa, currently lodged in the Bengaluru Central Prison in connection with the Renukaswamy murder case, to meet his family members and friends.

Allowing his application, the 57th CCH court directed prison authorities to facilitate the meetings in accordance with jail manual rules.

In the same case, the counsel for the third accused, Pavan, sought to name the investigating officer as an accused, alleging fabrication of evidence. However, the court dismissed the petition and imposed a fine of Rs 5,000, directing that the amount be paid to the District Legal Services Authority.

25-minute delay in producing accused not a fatal mistake: HC

Supari murder accused moves court over 24-hour arrest rule



BENGALURU, DHNS

The High Court of Karnataka has dismissed a murder accused's petition challenging a 25-minute delay in him being produced before a magistrate after arrest.

Justice M Nagaprasanna observed that, in certain circumstances, failure to produce an accused within the mandatory 24-hour period would not vitiate proceedings.

The petitioner, S Shivaraj, a driver from Shivamogga, is an accused in a supari murder case. According to the prosecution, he killed a man on May 23, 2025, allegedly at the behest of the victim's wife.

Shivaraj was apprehended on May 25, 2025, at the Kachinakatte bus stop in Shivamogga and formally arrested at 5 pm the same day. He was produced before a magistrate the following day at 5.25 pm.

The petitioner argued that the delay violated his constitutional right under Article 22(2) of the Constitution of India, which mandates that an arrested person be produced before a magistrate within 24 hours.

Relied on Google Maps

He relied on Google Maps to show that the journey from the bus stop where he was apprehended to the police station took 56 minutes, while the distance from the police station to the magistrate court was just two minutes.

Opposing this, the Additional State Public Prosecutor submitted that the delay occurred as the jurisdictional magistrate was on leave, and the accused had to be produced before an in-charge magistrate.

The court was also informed that the petitioner's bail plea had been rejected in December 2025 and that a charge sheet had been filed.

Citing judgments of the Supreme Court of India and the Bombay High Court, Justice Nagaprasanna noted that the requirement is to produce the accused with the least possible delay.

The court held that in the peculiar facts of the case, the delay — attributed to travel time and confusion over the appropriate court — was justified and did not invalidate the proceedings.

"The delay of 25 minutes in producing the petitioner before the magistrate is not fatal in the case at hand, as it is adequately explained by the prosecution," the court observed.

Head constable rescues man from suicide bid on railway track

BENGALURU, DHNS: A police officer rescued a man who was attempting to take his own life by lying on a railway track, officials said on Tuesday.

The police control room received an alert that a person was lying on the railway track near Yelahanka and attempting to die by suicide.

Head Constable Sridhar Murthy from the Yelahanka police station, who was on the Cheetah patrol motorcycle, immediately left for the spot on receiving the intimation from the control room.

Once at the location, Murthy rescued the person and counselled him.

"He provided proper guidance, making him understand that suicide is not a solution to any problem," a police statement said. "He then contacted his family members and safely handed the person over to them."

"Due to the prompt response, dedication to duty, and humane approach shown by Sridhar Murthy, HC-13669, a precious life was saved, and his timely action is highly commendable," it added.

Distressed due to financial and personal hardship, the man had decided to take his own life.

Watchful eyes

As he lay on the railway track, a person from a nearby apartment noticed him, recorded a video, and alerted the police control room.

Man bludgeons colleague to death over repeated abuse

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 22-year-old warehouse worker was allegedly bludgeoned to death with a hammer by his colleague after a dispute in Avalahalli on Tuesday.

The deceased, Kunal Kumar, and the suspect, MD Nasrullah, 24, worked in the cold storage section of a warehouse. Both are from Bihar.

Police said the two men quarrelled frequently at the workplace. For the past two weeks, Kumar had been abusing Nasrullah over minor mistakes.

Enraged by the repeated verbal abuse, Nasrullah went to Kumar's rented house in Kannamangala on Tuesday afternoon and attacked him with a hammer on the head, killing him on the spot.

Nasrullah then fled to Dobbspet to stay with a friend. From there, he planned to board a train to Mumbai, but police tracked him down.

A murder case has been registered against Nasrullah, and further investigation is underway, a senior police officer said.

Bus fare protest: 'Human parcel' stunt sparks panic

BENGALURU, DHNS

The stunt was meant for a social media protest reel, but it backfired as the elderly man developed breathing difficulty inside the sack.

A bizarre protest stunt triggered panic in central Bengaluru's Vyalikaval area after a family allegedly attempted to send an elderly man as a "parcel" to protest high bus fares ahead of Ugadi and Eid-ul-Fitr.

The family arrived at a private courier centre within the Vyalikaval police station limits on Tuesday evening, claiming they wanted to send a "human parcel" to highlight rising fares in both private and government buses.

Shocked by the request, the courier centre staff alerted the police.

During questioning, the man's daughter told the police the act was staged as a protest and for a social media reel. To dramatise their message, the family allegedly placed the elderly man inside a gunny sack and attempted to ship him.

She later admitted they realised the seriousness of their actions when the man experienced breathing difficulty inside the sack.

Police said the stunt could have endangered his life and led to serious legal consequences.

The family was let off with a warning after issuing a video apology, but officers cautioned against such dangerous and irresponsible acts.

Man kills minor fiancée in DJ Halli, flees

BENGALURU, DHNS: An underage girl was allegedly murdered by her fiancée in an abandoned house in DJ Halli, East Bengaluru, on Tuesday morning, police said.

The suspect, identified as 25-year-old Sabeel, was engaged to the 17-year-old girl in June 2025 despite her being underage.

Around 6.30 am on Tuesday, Sabeel took her into a relative's abandoned house in DJ Halli on the pretext of having "private talks". He then attacked her, slitting her throat before fleeing the spot.

The girl's family later found her body in a pool of blood and called the police.

DJ Halli police have opened a case of murder and launched a manhunt for Sabeel, who was found to have left his phone at his house in KG Halli.

Police are investigating the circumstances and motive for the murder.

Man loses gold necklace on bus journey after video call with mother

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 55-gram gold necklace was stolen during a KSRTC Airavat bus journey from Ernakulam to Bengaluru after a passenger discussed it over a video call.

Jayakumar R had travelled to Ernakulam on March 6 to attend his son's naming ceremony. His parents gifted his wife the necklace worth Rs 1.56 lakh. On March 11, he boarded the KSRTC Airavat bus to return to Bengaluru.

During the journey, he video-called his mother, who advised him to keep the necklace safely in his bag. He placed the jewellery inside his luggage kept in the overhead compartment behind his seat.

On reaching the Shanthinagar bus station in Bengaluru the next morning, Jayakumar found the zip of his bag jammed and the necklace missing. He filed a complaint at the Ashok Nagar police station.

Jayakumar, a former IT professional, said there were 21 passengers on the bus and suspected that some of them overheard his conversation with his mother and stole the necklace.

No CCTV on the bus

"I checked with the bus staff about the CCTV camera, but they told me since it was a semi-sleeper bus, no cameras were installed," he told *DH*.

Deepfake photos of woman uploaded online, FIR filed

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 24-year-old woman has filed a police complaint after finding her deepfake photographs online.

On March 8, the woman, a resident of JC Nagar, learnt from a friend that her obscene photographs were discovered on an adult website.

When the complainant checked the website, she was shocked to find her photographs, which she claimed were morphed using deepfake technology.

A case was registered under sections 66C (identity theft) and 67 (publishing or transmitting obscene material in electronic form) of the Information Technology (IT) Act.

◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL

'Ambedkar Smritisanchaya': State-level symposium; Karnataka Sanskrit University; Sri Krishnaraja Parishattina Mandir, Kannada Sahitya Parishath, Chamarajpet; 10 am.

International Women's Day Celebration: Women's Studies Center, Dr Manmohan Singh Bangalore City University; Gyanjyothi Hall, Central College Campus; 10.30 am.

Lecture: 'Women-Service and Sensibility'; Seshadripuram Pre-University College, Seshadripuram; from 12 pm onwards.

Presentation of Chhatrapati Shivaji Rashtra Award: To dignitaries on the occasion of Chhatrapati Shivaji Jayanti: Akhil Bharatiya Maratha Mahasangha; Ravindra Kalakshetra, JC Road; 6 pm.

State Handloom Exhibition: Shubha Convention, JP Nagar; 5 pm.

CULTURAL

Drama festival: 'Guru Sishyaru' and other drama performances; Ranga Kridhi Trust; Nayana Hall, Kannada Bhavan, JC Road; from 4.30 pm onwards.

Book release: P Keshav Murthy's 'Madhavi'; Karnataka Writers Association; BM Sree Kala Bhavan, NR Colony; 5 pm.

Invites to be published in this column should be sent to: **incitytoday@deccanherald.co.in.** Please note that hard copies will not be accepted

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST

Partly cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain or thundershowers

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	32.3°C
Minimum	24.4°C
Rainfall (as of 8:30 am)	--
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm)	40%
Sunset (March 19)	6:30 pm
Sunrise (March 20)	6:27 am
Moonrise	4:22 am
Moonset	4:12 pm

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

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Ramzan stalls switch to firewood

Some Iftar stalls have started using firewood for deep frying. DH PHOTOS

Stalls across Shivajinagar and Mosque Road see lower footfall and higher cylinder prices

SHRADDHA A K
TEAM METROLIFE

Iftar stalls in Shivajinagar and Mosque Road have taken a hit in the run-up to Eid.

The Iftar stall at Royal Restaurant, Shivajinagar, has been alternating between gas, charcoal and firewood since the LPG crisis began. Owner Iliyaz Ahmed says, "It has become difficult to find 19 kg cylinders, so we have been buying the 5 kg cylinders at Rs 1,300. They last for a day or two." He adds that earlier they would use up about two 19 kg cylinders per day, but have now been trying to limit the use of gas and cut down on fried items.

Grand Hilal Restaurant, also in Shivaji nagar, has completely switched to firewood for cooking. Owner Jabbar says it was relatively easier to make the switch as they used gas only for a handful of items like kebabs and samosas. "Commercial gas cylinders retail at Rs 4,500, and we were using about three cylinders per day. Now, we spend Rs 15 for a kilogram of firewood and use up around 40 kg per day," he adds.

Empire
Dear Guests,
Due to a temporary gas supply disruption, some menu items may be unavailable today.
Our team will be happy to guide you on the items currently available.
Thank you for your understanding and support.

Some stalls have put up notices informing customers that certain food items have been removed from the menu due to the LPG crisis, and have asked for their cooperation.

Other restaurants like Karama, Zayan Kabab Corner, and Albert Bakery on Mosque Road have also reduced gas usage and moved to firewood for popular Iftar dishes like kebabs and mutton brain samosas.

Pushing tandoori items

About 90% of the stalls from both Mosque Road and Shivajinagar have started pushing more firewood and charcoal-cooked foods like alfahm, tandoori kebabs, and biryani. Some have completely cut out rotis and chapatis made on the tawa.

Drop in footfall

"This Ramadan, sales have dropped due to a limited menu and food shortage during peak Iftar times," notes Gaffar, brand manager at Karama. He notes that while cooking over firewood takes longer, some customers are willing to wait. In response, Karama and its sister company, Empire, have posted notices about the reduced menu options.

Meanwhile, smaller eateries like Savera Tea Centre have shifted to a mix of woodfire and gas cooking and have limited their offerings to just tea and samosas.

Owner S Saleem Ahmed reveals they may close after Eid if cylinder costs remain high, sometimes as high as Rs 6,000 to 7,000.

Ugadi not hampered by LPG crisis

SATHVI G BHAT
TEAM METROLIFE

Despite the LPG crisis, Ugadi festivities in the city will carry on undisturbed, restaurateurs say.

Traditional banana leaf meals, elaborate menus and less-known dishes from hyper-regional cuisines of Karnataka are on the agenda.

Banana leaf feast

At Hallimane Malleswaram, diners can opt for a banana leaf meal featuring over 25 traditional Karnataka dishes and sweets, from vangi bath and raw jackfruit palya to aloo gadde halwa and bele holige. The Habbadoota is also available at their Dose Camp branches in Arekere and Banaswadi. They are also open for takeaways through pre-booking on their website hallimane.com.

The meal, which costs Rs 450 for adults and Rs 300 for children, will be available on March 19, 12 noon to 3.30 pm and 7 pm to 9.30 pm.

Region focus

The Karunadu Swada, a one-day food festival celebrating the diverse flavours and traditions of Karnataka, will be hosted by MTR Foods at Sahakarnagar ground. The festival offers over 40 regional dishes and sweets spanning the cuisines of North Karnataka, coastal Karnataka, and Kodagu. It will be made by over 30 home chefs. The unlimited menu is priced at Rs 249. On March 21, 12 noon to 9.30 pm.

Sajje (pearl millet) rotis are a part of the Karunadu Swada spread by MTR.

Four-day celebrations

At Oota Bangalore's Ugadi celebrations, diners can sample dishes like mavinkai karbuja panaka, beetroot-mavinkai kismuri, hesarukalu sabbakki soppu palya, ananas menaskai, thondekai nuggekai sambar and heerekai bajji. The Whitefield restaurant will be serving the special meals from March 19 to 22. The meal is priced at Rs 795.

Caterers, home kitchens tweak menus, pause orders

TINI SARA ANIEN
TEAM METROLIFE

Home-based kitchens and catering services are also feeling the pinch of the LPG crisis. While some are suggesting easy-to-cook alternatives to customers, others are considering pausing operations until the situation improves.

Sinu Swaminathan, who runs a catering service in Kalyan Nagar specialising in Kerala cuisine, is currently focusing on completing orders booked until April 5. "We have not taken any orders beyond that. We are waiting and watching the situation," she says.

If the crisis continues, Sinu may tweak her menu to include frozen, baked or air-fried items (such as stuffed breads and cutlets). "Even for current orders, I am asking customers to consider replacing items like appam with steam-based dishes like idiyappam, which need less cooking time. Most customers are okay with this," she adds.

Similarly, Sudha Mehta, who runs a catering venture in Ramachandrapuram, is asking customers to swap dishes like dal-rice or sambar-rice with curd rice, or choose phulkas instead of puris. "For desserts, we are suggesting options like shrikhand or gulab jamun instead of moong dal halwa or gajar halwa, which take longer to cook," she says.

At a catering service in Rajajinagar, customers are being encouraged to choose dishes that do not need reheating or can be heated in a tandoor. "For some orders, we are recommending tandoori rotis instead of other breads, and cold chaats instead of fried snacks," says its owner, Mamata Hemal Daftary.

Sinu Swaminathan, a caterer, has been suggesting customers to replace appam with steam-based dishes like idiyappam in their orders.

Suspending operations

A home kitchen-cum-catering venture in Vidyaranyapura is considering putting its business on hold until the situation improves. "I have taken bookings only until Easter (April 5), mostly for baked and air-fried snacks. To continue after that, I may need to invest in an electric cooking system," the owner says. Another home-based food business in Whitefield has enough gas to complete pre-booked festive orders only until this weekend. It plans to suspend operations from March 23 if the LPG crisis continues.

Human rights body seeks report on 'KD: The Devil' song row

Complaint flags 'vulgar' lyrics in 'Sarse ninna seraga sarse' as NHRC asks CBFC and ministries to submit report

TEAM METROLIFE

A day after the song 'Sarse ninna seraga sarse' faced backlash for its vulgar lyrics and suggestive choreography, a complaint has been filed with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

According to the complaint, the song from Dhruva Sarja-starrer 'KD: The Devil', released in multiple languages, contains "vulgar, sexually suggestive and double-meaning lyrics that are inappropriate for public consumption, especially for children".

The complaint also mentions that the song is widely accessible through television, social media and other public platforms that could negatively affect the mental well-being of minors and contribute to the normalisation of explicit expressions among young audiences.

The NHRC has directed the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and Google's Head of Core Government affairs and Public Policy to look into the allegations and submit a report within two weeks.

Women bodies file complaint

The Karnataka women bodies — Karnataka State Women's Anti-Violence Federation, the Karnataka Women Writers' Association, and the Janavadi Women's Organisation — also wrote to CBFC, the Karnataka Producers Association, the Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce and the Women's commission, urging them to take action against the song.

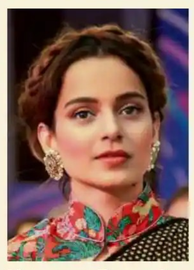
Women writers, activists and academics, including B T Lalitha Nayak, Hemalatha Mahishi and Pratibha Nandakumar, signed the letter.

Following this, the Karnataka State Women's Commission has directed the Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce to take appropriate action regarding objectionable lyrics in the song that insult women and harm social harmony.

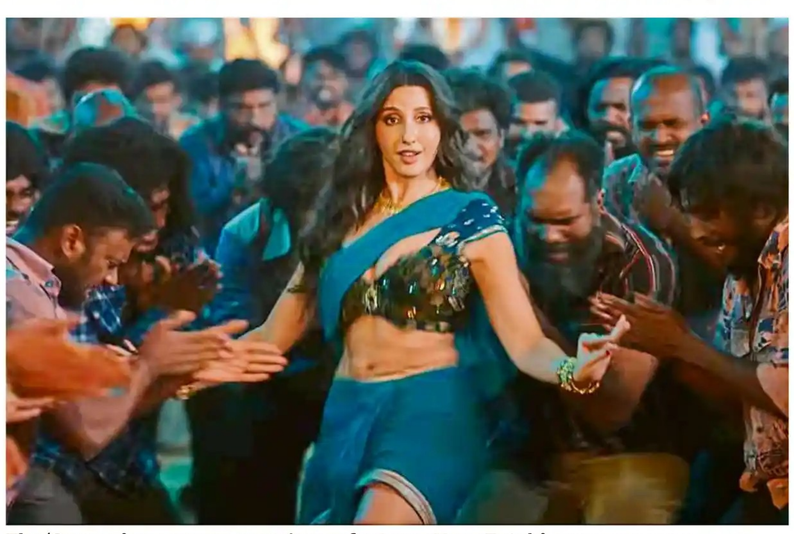
After heavy backlash, especially for the Hindi version, the makers of the film have removed the Hindi version from music streaming platforms. The song's lyrics are written by Prem, also the director of the film, in Kannada and by Raqeeb Alam in Hindi. The song features Nora Fatehi and Sanjay Dutt.

KANGANA RANAUT CALLS OUT THE SONG

Actor-politician Kangana Ranaut slammed the song's lyrics and visuals, after a Parliament session, calling them vulgar and inappropriate. She further added that the makers had crossed all limits for attention and described it as cheap tactics for attention seeking. "There need to be stricter rules about the display of such vulgarity and obscenity," she said.



Kangana Ranaut. PHOTO/PTI



The 'Sarse ninna seraga sarse' song features Nora Fatehi. SOURCE/YOUTUBE

POPCORN

Finger tips

Social media was convinced Netanyahu was missing in action. Posts were circulating about how, in the latest videos, he appeared with six fingers and so they were AI generated and fake. But soon he reappeared at a cafe, showing five fingers, and making the point that we was alive and kicking. His fingers looked fine, but don't know about his hands — is he hoping perfumes from Arabia will sweeten them?

SUMMER WOES

Hebbal Lake was recently drained as part of a comprehensive rejuvenation plan by the Greater Bengaluru Authority. With temperatures soaring, birds in the area were seen clustering around the lake's remaining water pockets. DH PHOTO/B K JANARDHAN

Art show on greenery and city opens Friday

An art exhibition opening this Friday pays homage to Bengaluru's greenery that continues to survive and thrive amid rapid urbanisation. Titled 'Pockets of Resistance', the show features 17 oil paintings and two soft sculptures.

The series explores both visible and hidden greenery, from avenue trees lining streets to lone trees wedged between buildings and weeds growing in the cracks of the pavement. The compositions evoke the sight of flowers, leaves, and twigs scattered on the ground.

For Bengaluru-based visual artist Kapila Nahender, the series is somewhat a metaphor for urban migration. She says that like leaves scattered by wind and rain, people are constantly arriving in and leaving Bengaluru, turning the city, like the earth, into a site for coexistence. She also finds the sight of fallen leaves holding small pools of water after rain profound. Kapila says this is akin to how people form comfort zones to protect their identity while living in shared environments.

The series was developed over one and a half years.

From March 20 to 29, 11 am to 6 pm, at Venkatappa Art Gallery, Kasturba Road. Entry free.

EVENTS

Comedy show
'Saree, These Are Just Jokes', a standup comic show by Sharul Channa from Singapore, will be held on March 20, 7.30 pm, at Jagriti Theatre, Whitefield. Tickets online.

Celebrating sound
Kivi Kodi, an evening to celebrate the sonic medium through installations, workshops and performances, on March 20, 4 pm to 8.30 pm at Angala, Cox Town. RSVP and pre-registration needed. For more details and passes, check @kivi.kodi on Instagram.

Music festival
The 88th Sree Ramanavami Global Music Festival will be held at Old Fort High School Grounds, Chamarajapet, between March 27 and April 22. It will feature artistes such as saxophonist Sridhar Sagar, vocalists Archana and Samanvi, musical duo Malladi Brothers, vocalist-violin duo Ranjani and Gayatri, Karnatik musicians Trichur Brothers, among others. For details, visit ramanavami.org

Film screening
Harshad Nalawade's acclaimed film 'Follower', about the border dispute between Karnataka and Maharashtra in Belagavi, will be screened on March 21, 6.30 pm at Suchitra Film Society, Banashankari. Entry free.

Hobbyists cheer research on birding virtues

A new study links the hobby to better attention and brain health

BARKHA KUMARI
TEAM METROLIFE

A Canadian study published last month in the *Journal of Neuroscience* suggests that birdwatching may benefit the brain and help slow cognitive decline with age. It found that experienced birders, including older adults, had denser brain tissue in areas linked to attention and perception. This was found to be associated with more accurate bird identification.

The news has given birders in Bengaluru reason to cheer. They say the skill of observing birds closely, and recognising their patterns and calls has had a positive impact on their lives. They say it has sharpened their attention to detail, improved memory, built patience, and helped them accept uncertainty and disappointment.

A bird walk in Bannerghatta, organised by BlrBirders in January. The group's membership has risen from 30-40 at the start of the pandemic to 600-700 now.

According to seasoned birder Ulhas Anand, these are valuable life skills.

Anand, who works in product design and is now head of innovation at a company, says the attention to detail he practises in birding carries into his work, from choosing colours and fonts to composing a page. Through birding, he also overcame his shyness. He now leads birding walks, and networks with enthusiasts across the world.

For Prashant V Sharma, a UX design lead, the hobby has taught him that with patience and perseverance come "incredible rewards". He recalls a trip to Uttarakhand, where his group was searching for the cheer pheasant. After hours of searching, the group was close to giving up, but their guide persisted and they finally spotted the bird.

Madhu Chandran, an educationist, says tracking subtle behavioural changes in birds has made him more attentive to behavioural changes in his students. It helps him step in when a student needs support.

Manjula Desai was once an introvert. Today, she speaks up for what is right, attributing it to her love for birds. While living in Hyderabad around 2017, she joined a citizen campaign protesting development projects around the KBR National Park. The effort succeeded and showed her the power of collective action. In Bengaluru, she continues to advocate for trees and other bird habitats.

For nature educator Bijoy Venugopal, birding brought clarity during a difficult phase in 2018-19. He was seriously unwell and unhappy at work and was considering quitting. "Around that time, I read 'Ikigai', a book that asks what truly brings you happiness. I knew the answer right away — birdwatching. I have been doing it since I was five," he says. With renewed clarity, he began to focus fully at work rather than feeling distracted, and soon secured a promotion.

AVIAN WATCH

- **Free walks:** The Birdwatchers' Field Club of Bangalore (better known as BlrBirders) organises free walks every Sunday at sites such as Saul Kere, Jakkur Lake, B M Kaval Reserve Forest, and The Valley School. Visit blrbirders.com
- **Women-only group:** The All Women Nature Walks group organises monthly walks. Visit @awnw.india on Instagram.
- **Common sightings:** On a good day, one can spot 80-90 species in a single habitat in the city. "The smallest bird is the pale-billed flowerpecker, about the size of a thumb and often seen in gardens. One of the largest is the spot-billed pelican, weighing 10 kg and with a wingspan of 6 feet. It can be seen around lakes," says Ulhas Anand.

Director of Postal Services (Karnataka Circle) Sandesh Mahadevappa, Chief Post Master General K Prakash and General Manager Julia Mohapatra launch the '24 Speed Post' and '48 Speed Post' services at the GPO in Bengaluru on Tuesday. DH PHOTO/B K JANARDHAN

New Speed Post service offers guaranteed next-day delivery

Priority handling, OTP confirmation and full postage refund for delays

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Department of Posts on Tuesday rolled out its premium '24 Speed Post' service, offering guaranteed next-day delivery across six cities, with Bengaluru emerging as a key focus city in the initial phase of the launch.

Apart from Bengaluru, it has also been launched in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and Hyderabad.

In Bengaluru, 42 post offices under the Karnataka Postal Circle have been identified to handle bookings for the 24-hour delivery service. The rollout will initially cover select PIN codes within the city, targeting both individual and bulk customers, including the growing base of e-commerce businesses.

The service assures delivery within 24 hours (D+1), supported by priority handling at every stage, OTP-based delivery confirmation and a full postage refund in case of delays, subject to claims, the department said in a statement.

Alongside, a '48 Speed Post' option promises delivery within two days, expanding the range of time-bound logistics solutions.

Pricing for the 24-hour service varies by weight and distance, starting at Rs 38 for local documents up to 50 grams and rising to Rs 186 for 500 grams over longer distances.

Parcel tariffs begin at Rs 200 for up to 500 grams and go up to Rs 990 for 5 kg, excluding GST. For the 48-hour service, the tariffs start at Rs 61 for documents up to 50 grams across varied distance slabs, and go up to Rs 121 for 500 grams over longer distances.

More eateries plan 'gas crisis charge' as prices near Rs 5K per cylinder

Restaurants face criticism from customers for added cost

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

Eateries in the city are considering levying 'gas crisis charge' on dine-in bills amid the ongoing crisis, but are worried about customer backlash too.

Casino, a restaurant on New BEL Road, has started levying a 10% 'gas crisis charge' since Tuesday.

"We've cut down our menu by at least 50%, but we're still having trouble running the restaurant, as we've had to pay Rs 4,800 for a cylinder, for which we would earlier pay Rs 1,500. So, for the time being, we have added this charge to help deal with the rising costs. We will remove it once the crisis subsides," an employee said.

Restaurants are facing criticism from customers for the added cost.

"Even if customers question us, we have a valid reason. We are explaining to them why this is being done. Since we have a regular customer base, most people are understanding," he added.

An Andhra cuisine restaurant in Marathalli is also levying a Rs 10 extra charge for each item purchased, under the same pretext.

A worker loads empty LPG cylinders into a truck in Bengaluru on Tuesday. DH PHOTO/B K JANARDHAN

As the crisis rages on, many restaurants are resorting to black market purchases, with each cylinder costing between Rs 4,000 and Rs 6,000. "I have no option but to purchase these cylinders in black at a higher cost. Now to balance out the increased cost, I need to make an addition either in the food prices or as an extra charge. My team is trying to figure which move will be better accepted by the customers. We don't want any unnecessary backlash," said the owner of a cafe in Indiranagar.

Another cafe in Kothanur, which went viral a few days ago for applying a 5% gas crisis charge on a lemonade bill, has retracted the move.

Avinash P, owner of Theo Cafe which issued the bill, claimed that the lemonade bill was merely a "technical glitch".

"If the LPG crisis continues, we will look into increasing the food prices. We will not be adding any gas crisis charge," he told *DH*.

The Karnataka State Hotels' Association is set to meet later this week to discuss a potential price hike.

"We are unsure about the next move, but no restaurant in our association will be levying a 'gas crisis charge'. As we stand today, the situation is only getting worse. Food menu price hike is one way to deal with the crisis, but we'll all meet and decide the best way forward," said Madhukar M Shetty, the association vice president.

No malpractice in II PUC exams; SSLC exams from today

BENGALURU, DHNS: The first examination for the second PUC concluded on Tuesday, with no malpractice cases reported in any subject.

The Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board (KSEAB) attributed this to the web streaming and the three-examination system.

"Before introducing web streaming, there used to be malpractice cases. Now, students are cautiously writing their exams without malpractices," an official said.

Council wishes all the best for students

Meanwhile, the Legislative Council on Tuesday approved a proposal placed by School Education and Literacy Minister Madhu Bangarappa and wished all the best for students appearing for SSLC exams starting from Wednesday.

Deputy Chairman M K Pranesh, who was in the chair, said, "On behalf of all the members, the House extends best wishes to the students appearing for the SSLC exams."

A total of 8,65,988 students are appearing for the SSLC examination 1 at 2,870 exam centres spread across the state.

IndiGo to stop S'mogga-B'luru flight service

SHIVAMOGGA, DHNS: In accordance with the guidelines of the DGCA, IndiGo Airlines has decided to temporarily suspend flights between Shivamogga and Bengaluru from May 1 due to shortage of pilots.

The company said it will suspend operations for 3 months. Since monsoon starts in mid-May, it is the off-season period. Passengers will not be affected much, he added. After the crash of an Air India flight in Ahmedabad on June 12, 2025, DGCA has formulated some rules for safety of flights.

Meat, fish sales fall 30% as hotels trim menu

ASHWIN B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

A severe shortage of commercial LPG cylinders has crippled Bengaluru's meat and fish trade, with sales dropping by nearly 30% over the last week.

As hotels and restaurants cut down on their menus or shut down entirely due to the crisis, the bulk-buy demand has come down.

Establishments that previously purchased 80 to 100 kg of chicken daily have slashed orders to less than 10 kg.

The situation at major fish markets including Russell Market in Shivajinagar and Yeswantpur market is also dull. Over 220 traders are struggling as hospitality clients who usually buy 20 to 30 kg of seafood are now picking up only 3 to 4 kg.

Wholesale poultry dealers, who typically supply 80 to 100 kg of chicken daily to mid-sized restaurants, say that orders have shrunk to a mere fraction. DH PHOTO/B K JANARDHAN

In Russell Market, "where 20 tonnes of fish are usually traded daily, the volume has dropped significantly. Traders who used to move 30 kg of fish to single restaurants are now struggling to sell even 5 kg to the same clients," says a vendor.

"Our regular business is down by 25 to 30%," said Syed Khan, a local mutton stall owner.

"Even with the Ugadi festival approaching, shortage of gas in hotels means they aren't buying. If they don't cook, we don't sell".

Wholesale poultry dealers, who typically supply 80 to 100 kg of chicken daily to mid-sized restaurants, said that orders had shrunk to a mere fraction.

A local wholesaler said: "Last week, I was supplying 1,500 kg of broiler chicken daily to a cluster of hotels. Today, that number is barely 200 kg. When hotels switch to firewood or shut down, our meat just sits in cold storage, costing us additional electricity charges. We've had to drop our wholesale price by Rs 25 per kg just to keep the stocks moving, but even at a loss, there are no takers".

Pre-monsoon showers across state; hailstorm in Bengaluru

BENGALURU, DHNS: Many parts of Karnataka received first spell of pre-monsoon rainfall on Tuesday, bringing down summer heat.

In Bengaluru, heavy rainfall was accompanied by lightning and gusty wind, later topped with hailstorm, in Sanjayanagar, Yelahanka and Devanahalli.

There was moderate to heavy rainfall in Konanakunte, Kanakapura Road, RR Nagar, Banashankari 6th Stage, Sampigehalli, Kathriguppe, Horamavu and parts of CBD.

N Puviarasan, head of meteorological centre at India Meteorological Department, Bengaluru, confirmed hailstorm occurred for a short duration.

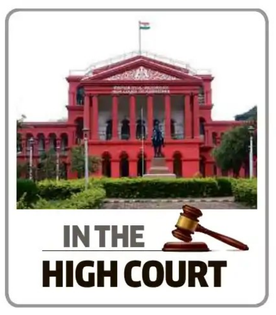
The rain had an immediate effect on maximum temperature, which fell by 1.3°C to 32.3°C in Bengaluru city and by 1.2°C to 32°C at HAL airport.

GBA's disaster management team has asked people to contact helpline 1533 or Whatsapp 94806 85700.

For Mar 18, IMD has forecast light to moderate rain/thundershowers at one or two places over Bengaluru Urban, Bengaluru Rural, Ramanagara, Tumakuru, Mandya, Chikkamagaluru, Shivamogga, Hassan, Kodagu, Davangere, Mysuru and Chamarajanagar.

Commercial LPG: Reply by Mar 23, HC tells Centre, state

BENGALURU, DHNS:



The High Court of Karnataka on Tuesday directed the union and state governments to respond by March 23 regarding the allocation, stock and other aspects pertaining to the supply of commercial LPG cylinders in the state.

Justice Sachin Shankar Magadum gave this direction after hearing a petition filed by the Bangalore Hotels Association and others.

K Sathish, counsel for the petitioners, submitted that the state government's new priority-based allocation of 1,000 commercial LPG cylinders per day to the hotels in the entire state does not meet the requirements. He noted that Bengaluru alone has 40,000 hotels and restaurants and this allocation is less than 5% of the regular supplies.

There is an acute shortage of cylinders at least in Bengaluru, if not throughout the state. Many restaurants have closed in and around Bengaluru. A huge population is dependent on hotel food, and a supply chain would be affected, the petitioners stated.

The petition further said that the hotel industry employs over six lakh people in Bengaluru and must be considered on top of the priority-based allocation.

The petitioners stated that on March 5, the union government had passed an order under the Essential Commodities Act to regulate the production, storage and supply of petroleum products. After taking stock of the situation, on March 16, the state government took a decision to prioritise the daily supply of commercial LPG cylinders restricting 1,000 cylinders to hotels across the state, the petition said.

A blanket of hailstones covers a farmland in Machapura of Kalghatagi taluk in Dharwad district on Tuesday.

A North West Karnataka Transport Corporation bus is stuck in a hailstone-ridden road near Kalghatagi.

Unusual hailstorm blankets Kalghatagi

KALGHATAGI (DHARWAD DISTRICT), DHNS

Heaps of hailstones along the Kalghatagi–Mundgod highway disrupted smooth vehicular movement near Machapura in Kalghatagi taluk of Dharwad district on Tuesday. In Betadur of Kundgol taluk and Machapura areas, hailstones blanketed roads, drains, rooftops and farmlands.

A severe hailstorm accompanied by strong winds struck various villages in Kalghatagi taluk, including the town of Kalghatagi itself.

Hailstones fell in large quantities, covering roads, drains, and farmland near Machapura village, along the Kalghatagi-Mundagod state highway on the outskirts of Kalghatagi town.

A KSRTC bus heading towards Kalghatagi got stuck in the heaps of hailstones on the road and was unable to move for a while, causing inconvenience to passengers.

Locals rushed to witness the unusual sight, sharing their excitement. Many remarked that they had never seen such a heavy hailstorm, comparing it to snowfall in Jammu & Kashmir. The storm brought a sudden drop in temperature, providing relief from sweltering heat.

"This is the first time such a huge quantity of hailstones fallen in the Kalghatagi area. It has damaged mango orchards and soybean crops," said Parashurama Ettinagudda, a progressive farmer from Sulikatti village, urging officials to inspect and assess the damage to farmers' fields.

Several districts across North Karnataka received heavy rainfall, accompanied by lightning, thunder and hail.

Dharwad, Gadag, Uttara Kannada, Bagalkot, Belagavi, Ballari, Vijayapura and Haveri district received enormous rainfall. Sources in the Tungabhadra Board allayed fears of the heavy rain impacting ongoing work on the crest gates at the reservoir. "Work on the crest gates will continue uninterrupted," sources said.

N Puviarasan, head of the Bengaluru Meteorological Centre, said hailstorms are common during pre-monsoon showers. The reason for parts of North Karnataka receiving hailstorms could be due to two cyclonic winds from Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea, he said.

Rail Wheel Plant/Bela
(Distt. - Saran), Bihar - 841221

Auction Notice No. 02/2026

No. S/RWP/Sale/Auction Programme/ 2026 -27 Date: 17.03.2026 Auction will be conducted for disposal of scrap material Slag, Graphite Mould Blank and Other Misc. Scrap. **The date of e-Auction Programme for the month of April, May, June, July, August, September-2026. SN :** 1, **Depot conducting Auction :** RWP/Bela, Saran, **Date of e-Auction :** 10.04.2026, **SN :** 2, **Depot conducting Auction :** RWP/Bela, Saran, **Date of e-Auction :** 24.04.2026, **SN :** 3, **Depot conducting Auction :** RWP/Bela, Saran, **Date of e-Auction :** 08.05.2026, **SN :** 4, **Depot conducting Auction :** RWP/Bela, Saran, **Date of e-Auction :** 22.05.2026, **SN :** 5, **Depot conducting Auction :** RWP/Bela, Saran, **Date of e-Auction :** 12.06.2026, **SN :** 6, **Depot conducting Auction :** RWP/Bela, Saran, **Date of e-Auction :** 26.06.2026, **SN :** 7, **Depot conducting Auction :** RWP/Bela, Saran, **Date of e-Auction :** 10.07.2026, **SN :** 8, **Depot conducting Auction :** RWP/Bela, Saran, **Date of e-Auction :** 24.07.2026, **SN :** 9, **Depot conducting Auction :** RWP/Bela, Saran, **Date of e-Auction :** 07.08.2026, **SN :** 10, **Depot conducting Auction :** RWP/Bela, Saran, **Date of e-Auction :** 21.08.2026, **SN :** 11, **Depot conducting Auction :** RWP/Bela, Saran, **Date of e-Auction :** 11.09.2026, **SN :** 12, **Depot conducting Auction :** RWP/Bela, Saran, **Date of e-Auction :** 25.09.2026, **1.** The details of item to be sold in auction will be available in catalogue at **www.ireps.gov.in**. **2.** The intending purchasers may inspect the scrap material before the auction during working hours at nominated locations. **3.** To participate in e-auction, purchasers need to get themselves registered with ireps. For further details regarding registration and other condition of e-auction, please visit railway website **www.ireps.gov.in**.

Dy. Chief Material Manager-II/RWP/Bela
RWP/CPRO/ADVT/2025-26/122

CENTRAL RAILWAY
SOLAPUR DIVISION
TRANSPORTATION WORKS

DRM(M)'s office, Central Railway, Solapur on behalf of the President of India invites sealed tender from the reputed firms/contractors for the following work. **Tender Notice No.: GEM/2026/B/7340320 dated: 13.03.2026; Name of Work with its locality:** The contract work of transportation of assembled bogies with wheel set from coaching depot Solapur to Mantunga workshop, Parcel workshop or any other nominated workshop over Indian Railway or versa in open flat truck with suitable/security arrangement through GeM. **System of tendering:** Two Packet System. **Approximate cost of work:** Rs. 2,39,81,299.25 **Cost of Tender Form:** Nil, **Address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased:** DRM(M)'s office, Central Railway, Solapur, **Earnest Money to be deposited:** Rs. 2,69,910/- **Completion period of the work:** Three years from the date of commencement of the work. **Date and time for submission of tender:** 06.04.2026 at 10:00 hrs., **Date and time of opening of tender:** 06.04.2026 at 10:30 hrs., **website particulars & notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen: www.gem.gov.in/**

Sr. Divisional Mechanical Engineer
DE/Sur-06 Central Railway, Solapur

TRAVEL SAFELY, AVOID FOOTBOARD TRAVELLING

PM SHRI KENDRIYA VIDYALAYA
NO1 JALAHALLI (WEST), BENGALURU-560 015

WALK- IN INTERVIEW FOR CONTRACTUAL TEACHERS: 2026-27

Walk-in interview will be conducted in PM SHRI Kendriya vidyalaya No1 Jalahalli west, Bengaluru-560 015 for Empanelment of Teachers on part- time contractual basis for the Academic year 2026-27 for the posts and dates mentioned below:

DATE OF INTERVIEW	CATEGORY OF POSTS/ SUBJECTS
23.03.2026 (Monday)	**Post Graduate Teachers:** Geography, History, Economics, Commerce. **Trained Graduate Teachers:** Hindi, Social Science, Art & Craft **Primary Teachers (PRT)**

For more details about Eligibility, Qualification & Remuneration please refer our Vidyalaya Website: **https://no1jalahalli.kvs.ac.in Phone: 080 28388422.**

It is mandatory for all candidates to visit the website, complete the registration process and upload all the required documents prior to appearing for the interview.

Bring one set of photo copies of all the certificates along with original certificates, photo and Id Proof.

Registration form may be downloaded from website.

PRINCIPAL

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice No.: CAO/CN/BNC/176/2026 Dated 12.03.2026

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following works:

Item of work	Approx. Value
Execution of Earth work, site cleaning, Tree cutting and transportation, fencing land boundary marking, pillaring, dismantlling, land Acquisition, liasoning, possession and land mutation and miscellaneous civil works for Belur - Alur New Railway BG line from chainage Km: 66440 to 93887. **(Tender Ref. No. HAS-BELUR-ALUR-MISCWORKS)**	Rs. 4,59,43,891.00

Last date for submission of bids: **Upto 15:00 Hrs. on 07.04.2026**

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Deputy Chief Engineer/Construction/ Works/Bengaluru Cantt.
PUB/1007/AAMO/PRB/SWR/2025-26

Download the **RailOne** app. RailOne is the all-in-one railway app by Indian Railways. Passengers can book reserved tickets, unreserved tickets, platform tickets, and season passes, check PNR status, order food, and access many more services at their fingertips. Use digital payment to book unreserved tickets through **RailOne** app, and enjoy up to a **3%** discount.

South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRAILWAYHQ | sw_railways

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice No.: ECN-TRD-03-2026 Dated 12.03.2026

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following works:

Item of work	Approx. Value
Design, Supply, Erection, Testing, Commissioning of 2x25 kv OHE, PSI System (TSS's, SP's & SSP's), Transmission Line Provision from GSS to TSS, Electrical General Works, Engineering Works and Signalling & Telecommunication Works of Ginigera and Raichur Section (166 Rkm / 204 Tkm).	Rs. 3,11,60,07,445.45/-

Last date for submission of bids: **Upto 11:00 Hrs. on 10.07.2026**

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer/Traction Distributon-II/Construction/Bengaluru
PUB/1001/AAMO/PRB/SWR/2025-26

Download the **RailOne** app. RailOne is the all-in-one railway app by Indian Railways. Passengers can book reserved tickets, unreserved tickets, platform tickets, and season passes, check PNR status, order food, and access many more services at their fingertips. Use digital payment to book unreserved tickets through **RailOne** app, and enjoy up to a **3%** discount.

South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRAILWAYHQ | sw_railways

Mukta Swadhyaya Peetham
(Intstitute of Open and Distance Education)
Central Sanskrit University
56-57, Institutional Area, Janakpuri, New Delhi-110058

Adv. No.-02/2025-2026 Dated: 18/03/2026

Notification

Applications are invited for various contractual positions of Assistant Professors (Contract) in various Sanskrit subjects, Sanskrit Language teacher and Technical staff (Technical Managers, Technical Assistants, Senior Consultant). Apply before 27-03-2026. Visit website **(https://www.sanskrit.nic.in/** and **https://www.msp.ac.in/)** for more details.

CBC 21212/12/0006/2526 **-Director**

S. E. RAILWAY – TENDER

CORRIGENDUM

Corrigendum of **E-Tender Notice No. WLI-UND-1275-1** and **WLI-OVH-1250-1** published earlier by Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer (CW), Kharagpur workshop, the **Earnest Money** should be read as **Rs. 7,73,300/-** and **Rs. 7,58,200/-** instead of 3,43,300/- and 3,39,500/- respectively. Detail Tender Notice and Tender Document with corrigendum is available in the e-Portal website **https://www.ireps.gov.in** **(PR-1315/C)**

MANUFACTURING, SUPPLYING AND INSTALLATION WORKS

Tender Notice No.: DCBL/01/2026/MLG, **Date:** 13-03-2026. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work; **Tender No.:** DCBL012026MLG; **Name of Work :** Manufacturing, Supplying and installation of inspection arrangement for top chord of 83 nos. OWG girder under SSE/BR/ Bongaigaon & Rangapara North. **Approximate Tender Value:** ₹38,42,31,157.44/-; **Bid Security:** ₹20,71,200/-; **Tender No.:** DCBL022026MLG; **Name of Work :** Maintenance of Intelligent Water Level Monitoring Instruments (WLMI) for two years for identified Important/ Major Bridge-Line Unit of N.F. Railway (Remote site annual maintenance & technical support and hardware AMC for two years at various Bridges over N.F. Railway). **Approximate Tender Value :**₹5,28,65,703/-; **Bid Security:** ₹4,14,300/-; Date & time of **closing** of above tenders at **15:00** hrs. and **opening** of tenders at **15:05** hrs. on **06-04-2026**. Complete information alongwith tender document of above e-tender will be available in the website **https://www.ireps.gov.in**

Dy. CE/Bridge-Line, Maligaon
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय, लघु सिंचाई प्रमंडल, गोड्डा।

अल्पकालीन ई0–पुनर्निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना।

Short Term Re e-Tender Reference No.-WRD/MID/GODDA/ F2-12 2nd Call/2025-26 Gr. No.-03, Date-17.03.2026

1. विज्ञापनदाता का नाम : कार्यपालक अभियंता, लघु सिंचाई प्रमंडल, गोड्डा।
2. वेवसाइट में ई0–निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि : 25.03.2026
3. ई0–निविदा प्राप्ति की तिथि एवं समय : 04.04.2026 अपराहन 05:00 बजे तक
4. ई0–निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं स्थान : 06.04.2026 अपराहन 05:00 बजे मुख्य अभियंता का कार्यालय लघु सिंचाई, दुमका।

ग्रुप सं0	कार्य का मद	योजना का नाम	प्रखण्ड	प्राक्कलित राशि (लाख में)	अग्रधन की राशि (रूपये में)	परिमाण विपत्र का मूल्य (रूपये में)	कार्य की अवधि
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3	राज्य सम्पोषित योजना	राजा डांड़ नाला एवं हरिपुर नाला का जीर्णोद्धार।	महागामा	247.008	4,95,000.00	10,000.00	11 माह

नोटः– 1. केवल ई–निविदा ही स्वीकार किया जायेगा।
2. प्राक्कलित राशि घट–बढ़ सकती है।
3. निविदा शुल्क एवं अग्रधन की राशि केवल Online Mode द्वारा ही स्वीकार्य होगी।
4. निविदा शुल्क एवं अग्रधन की राशि का ई–भुगतान जिस खाता से किया जायेगा, उसी खाते में अग्रधन की राशि वापस होगी। अगर खाता को बंद कर दिया जाता है तो उसकी सारी जवाबदेही आपकी होगी।
5- Work performance :- पूर्व से आवंटित कार्य 90 प्रतिशत से अधिक पूर्ण नहीं रहने तथा समानुपातिक प्रगति नहीं पाये जाने पर अन्य कार्यो में डाली गई निविदा विचारणीय नहीं होगा।
6. समान प्रकृति का कार्य अनुभव अनिवार्य है।
7. विस्तृत जानकारी के लिए वेवसाईट http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in पर लॉग आन करें।

कार्यपालक अभियंता,
लघु सिंचाई प्रमंडल, गोड्डा।
Mob.- 9939708923

PR 375314 (Minor Irrigation) 25-26 (D)

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JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Teachers/ Professors

Wanted Experienced Lady Teachers with excellent communication skills in English

1. Lower Primary
BSc (PCM) Graduate with B.Ed./D.Ed.

2. Higher Primary
Graduate with B.Ed. to teach English, Hindi and Social Science.

3. High School
Post Graduate with B.Ed. to teach English, Social Science and Science (Chemistry & Biology)

Walk-in Interview
Monday, 23rd and Tuesday, 24th March 2026
Between: 3 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Or Email your resume to info@florence.edu.in for an appointment

Florence High School
3rd Block, 3rd Stage, Basaveshwaranagar, Bengaluru-560 079
Tel : 080-23236160/41536695

HOLY ANGEL'S High School,Hampinagar, Vijayanagar, Bengaluru-560104. Phone: 23404465/23202042 holyangels.highschoolrpclayout@gmail.com Requires Experienced Trained Teachers for the Academic year 2026-27 for High School Ist Language English, Mathematics, Science &SocialScience. STATE & ICSE. Qualification: B.A./B.Sc.,B.Ed/ M.A./M.Sc.,M.Ed. Only English Medium Candidates need to apply.

ST FLOWERS ENGLISH SCHOOL ICSE-STATE, Bangalore 9686732171, 080-23399884/ 080-23408832, stflowerenglishschool@gmail.com Required Experience Trained Teachers for the Academic Year 2026-2027 For Primary and High School Kannada, Hindi, English, Social Teacher (MA , B.Ed) Maths, Science (M.Sc , B.Ed) Physical Education (BPEd, MPEd) Computer Science (M.Sc, B.Ed) Nursery Teachers NTT, Basic Degree with B.Ed Trained teachers.

HERITAGE PUBLIC SCHOOL Konanakunte, requires: HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS for Physics Chemistry Biology PRIMARY TEACHERS for all subjects and KG-COORDINATOR WhatsApp or email resume to Mob: 9901733776. Email: heritagepublicschoolkk@gmail.com

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REQUIRED EXPERIENCED Primary and High School Teachers with B.A / B.Sc, B.Ed / M.A / M.Sc, M.Ed to teach Science, Social Science, Mathemetics, English, Hindi & PE Teacher. Required Librarian, Lab Assistant & Drivers. Walk-in-interview. Contact: Lalith Castle International School, Rajarajeshwari Nagar, Blore-98. Mob: 9620464800 Email: lcis.rrnagar@gmail.com

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THE MYSORE EDUCATION SOCIETY

"Brahmi", KISHORA KENDRA, 10th MAIN, 15th CROSS, MALLESWARAM, BANGALORE – 560 003. Website: : https://mesinstitutions.in.

Invites applications for the following posts:

Post Title	Subject	Essential Qualification	Desirable Qualification
Principal for PU Colleges	Academics & Administration	Postgraduate in relevant discipline and B.Ed. with minimum 55% marks. Knowledge of ICT, computer applications, Kannada & English.	Ph.D., teaching and administrative experience. Minimum 10 years in similar capacity
Teachers – High School (ICSE)	English & Social (Leave Vacancy)/Hindi	Master's degree with minimum 55% marks and B.Ed. in relevant subject(s).	Teaching experience and ICT usage.
Teachers – Primary & High School (State Board)	EVS & Kannada/Mathematics (Primary) English (High School)	Bachelor's degree with minimum 55% marks and B.Ed. in relevant subject(s).	Teaching experience and ICT usage.
Teacher	Art & Craft	Bachelor's in Fine Arts & Crafts or Visual Arts with 55% marks and Diploma in Arts & Crafts.	Teaching experience and ICT usage.
Teacher	Dance	Bachelor's in Performing Arts.	Teaching experience.
Teacher	Music	Bachelor's in Music/Vidwath/ Diploma in Music.	Teaching experience.
Lecturers – PU Colleges	Kannada/English/Hindi/ Sanskrit/Physics/Chemistry/ Mathematics/Biology/Computer Science/Commerce/Statistics/ Sociology	Master's in relevant subject with 55% marks and B.Ed.	Teaching experience and ICT usage.
Librarian – School	Librarian	Bachelor's in Library/Information/ Documentation Science with 55% marks.	Experience, computer skills, web content management.
Counsellor	Counsellor Schools & PU Colleges	Master's in Psychology or PG Diploma in Counselling.	3-5 years experience.
Teacher	Rangashale	Any Bachelor's Degree with a minimum of 55% marks with one-year Theatre Teaching experience	Theatre Diploma, Stage Music (Rangasangeetha)

1. Applications with BIO-DATA and copies of certificates of their qualifications and experience etc., should reach the Chief Executive Officer, MES, at the above address on or before **31.03.2026** duly superscribing the envelope with **"Application for the post of _____"**.
2. Candidates with experience are preferred.
3. Competency in ICT enabled teaching is desirable.
4. All posts are tenable in any of the MES Institutions and are transferable.
5. The decision of the selection committee is final.
6. Resorting to any sort of influence will be deemed as a disqualification of the candidature.
7. Download the application form from the MES website: https://mesinstitutions.in

Advt. No. MES/19-5/ADM-1/2026 Dated 18.03.2026 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

THE MYSORE EDUCATION SOCIETY

"Brahmi", KISHORA KENDRA, 10th MAIN, 15th CROSS, MALLESWARAM, BANGALORE – 560 003. Website: : https://mesinstitutions.in.

(All the post are for self-financed (un-aided) Programs)

Invites applications **for the teaching faculty for the following Departments in MES College of Arts Commerce & Science and MES Institute of Management**

Post Title	Subject	Essential Qualification	Desirable Qualification
Research Associate	Biotechnology / Microbiology	Ph.D. in Biotechnology / Microbiology or a relevant discipline from a recognized university Completion of mandatory coursework as per UGC norms	Proven experience in conducting in-depth scientific investigations Experience in executing and managing funded research projects Demonstrated research output (publications, patents, project reports, etc.)
Professor / Associate Professor (Full Time)	Computer Science/ Commerce/ Management	(i) Post-graduate in relevant discipline from a recognized university with a minimum of 55% marks or equivalent grade (ii) Should have Ph.D. degree from a recognized university by UGC in the relevant subject (with course work included as part of doctoral program).	NET/SLET qualification, Research Publications, Funded Projects, Post-doctoral experience, knowledge of computer applications, usage of ICT in teaching. Teaching experience: Professor: Minimum 12 years Associate Professor: Minimum 8 years
Assistant Professor (Full Time)	Kannada/English/Hindi/ Journalism/Psychology/ Physics/Chemistry/ Commerce / Computer Science / Management / Political Science/Botany/ Micro Biology	(i) post-graduate in relevant discipline from a recognized university with a minimum of 55% marks or equivalent grade (ii) with NET/SLET examination or Ph.D. degree from a recognized university by UGC in the relevant subject. (with course work included as part of doctoral program).	(i) 3 years of teaching experience (ii) Knowledge of Computers. Usage of ICT in teaching
Assistant Professor (Part-Time)	English/Sanskrit/ Journalism/History/ Political Science/Forensic Science/Bio-Technology		

1. Attractive salary commemorates with qualification & experience.
2. Applications with BIO-DATA and copies of certificates of qualifications and experience etc., should reach the Chief Executive Officer, MES at the above address on or before **31.03.2026** duly superscribing the envelope with **"Application for the post of _____"**.
3. Decision of the selection committee is final.
4. Resorting to any sort of influence will be deemed as a disqualification of the candidature.
5. Download the application form from the MES website: https://mesinstitutions.in

Advt. No. MES/19-4/ADM-1/2026 Dated 18.03.2026 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

DON BOSCO ICSE SCHOOL

CHITHRA DON BOSCO Campus, Kuvempu Nagar, Padma Layout, Chitradurga - 577 501.

VACANCIES FOR 2026 - 2027

Sl.No.	Subject	Qualification
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BJP slams 'ailing' health dept, stages walkout; minister bins charges

Dinesh cites 'transparency in transfers, drugs procurement'

BENGALURU, DHNS

Leader of Opposition R Ashoka makes a point during the session in Legislative Assembly at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Tuesday.

Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka on Tuesday launched a scathing attack on the health department, alleging systemic collapse marked by shortage of essential medicines, staff vacancies and administrative infighting.

Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao dismissed the charges, prompting a BJP walkout in the Assembly.

Speaking during a discussion, Ashoka said shortages of medicines and basic amenities were forcing patients to seek expensive private care.

"The department cannot be fixed with mere slogans," he said.

Citing a doctors' association letter on medicine shortages leading to conflict between patients and doctors, and another by the health secretary seeking restructuring, Ashoka said, "There is internal conflict. The principal secretary has not attended office for about eight months and works alone. He wrote to DPAR that lower-level officers are sending files without scrutiny and called for restructuring and direct recruitment. Later, the secretariat employees' union wrote against him, alleging he exceeded his scope and demoralised staff".

Flagging budget priorities, Ashoka said Karnataka allocates 4.9% to health.

"Delhi spends 14.5% and Rajasthan 8.4%. Is Karnataka prioritising public health?" he said. wAfter Sharada Poorya Nayak raised the transfers issue, Ashoka said 228 doctors from CHCs had been shifted and demanded withdrawal of the order.

Dr C N Ashwath Narayan said, "Out of 7,173 sanctioned posts, only 4,927 doctors are available. We are adding beds, but not doctors or nurses. Patient numbers are declining due to lack of facilities, there are 40% nurse vacancies, low salaries, lack of lab facilities and CT/MRI scans at taluk hospitals, shortage of essential medicines and there is no uniform ambulance policy". He termed the new counselling Act (for transfers) "draconian".

When Rao said maternal mortality dropped from 62 in 2023 to 48 in 2026, due to death audits and better monitoring of high risk pregnancies, Narayan countered that deliveries in government hospitals had fallen by 30–40%.

"Amid shortages, Karnataka spent only 50% of the Karnataka State Medical Supplies Corporation Limited (KSMSCL) funds in 2025-26. Out of 543 essential medicines, district hospitals have only 150, and PHCs 50 out of 234," he said.

Rejecting the charges, Rao said, "There was a loophole in procurement, now it's reformed. Tendering is transparent, medicines undergo quality checks and quarantine testing. We will procure 890 medicines—534 through KSMSCL and 356 locally — with staggered quarterly supply. E-medicine software enables real-time verification".

On transfers, he said, "Rationalisation ensures better utilisation of staff. Hospitals must provide round-the-clock services. Where there is no workload, staff are reallocated. Additional doctors will be deployed where needed".

'No shortage of drugs at govt hospitals'

BENGALURU, DHNS: Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao informed the Legislative Council that there was no shortage of drugs in government hospitals.

Replying to the issue raised by BJP members Dr Dhananjay Sarji and Pratap Simha Nayak, the minister said that there was no shortage of medicines at any hospital.

"As per the old list, of the 534 medicines, 487 are in stock and all essential drugs are available at all hospitals," he informed the House.

He said there had been a "slight delay" in supply since reforms - including inspection of medicine manufacturing plants and quarantining the medicine after procurement for lab testing - had been implemented.

Dinesh assured that the centralised supply will be increased this month and local purchase will be reduced.

Earlier, raising the issue, the members complained of drugs shortage. Dr Sarji said, "Though the numbers at OPDs have increased, medicine procurement is reduced by 50%. In some hospitals, even IV fluid is not available. Only paracetamol is available".

Leader of the Opposition Chalavadi Narayanaswamy alleged that the companies blacklisted by other states had been allowed to participate in the medicine supply tender in Karnataka.

Dinesh clarified that if firms were blacklisted for a particular medicine, they were not allowed to participate in a tender to procure that particular medicine even in Karnataka.

Cabinet rejig demand: Congress lawmakers to visit Delhi

BENGALURU, DHNS: As many as 40 Congress lawmakers have decided to travel to Delhi on April 11 to meet the high command and press for a Cabinet reshuffle that was 'promised' after 2.5 years of the government.

A team of MLAs led by government chief whip Ashok Pattan met CM Siddaramaiah to discuss the reshuffle on Tuesday.

MLAs H C Balakrishna, N A Haris, K Shadakshari, Mahantesh Koujalagi, Hampanagouda Badarli, S N Narayanaswamy, Raghavendra Hitnal and others met Siddaramaiah.

"On April 11, as many as 40 of us will go to Delhi. We've already informed our Delhi leaders about the visit," Pattan said.

The CM told the delegation that he, too, would speak to the high command on this. "The CM said he would also travel to Delhi after elections in 5 states," Pattan said.

Balakrishna said there are about 40 lawmakers who have won three or more times. "We asked the CM to bring in fresh faces," he said.

Balakrishna is a loyalist of Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar.

Asked about speculation that the Cabinet reshuffle will not happen unless the leadership dispute between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar is finalised, Balakrishna said: "Confusion over leadership is up to the high command. It's not for us to decide".

VIT Mauritius hosts Global Tech Ideathon 2026

VIT Mauritius hosted its flagship virtual Tech Ideathon 2026 in collaboration with the Institution of Engineers and Scientists (IoES), drawing over 3,500 submissions worldwide. The two-day event engaged 1,612 participants from 297 institutions across Mauritius, India, Malaysia, Philippines and the United States, fostering global collaboration and innovation.

The Ideathon reinforced VIT Mauritius' global presence and commitment to future-ready engineering education. Scholarship applications are now open for the August 2026 intake across its B.Eng. (Hons) programmes.

DH VIT Mauritius

Students of VIT Mauritius display the smart rain sensing automated irrigation system developed by them at the Global Tech Ideathon 2026.

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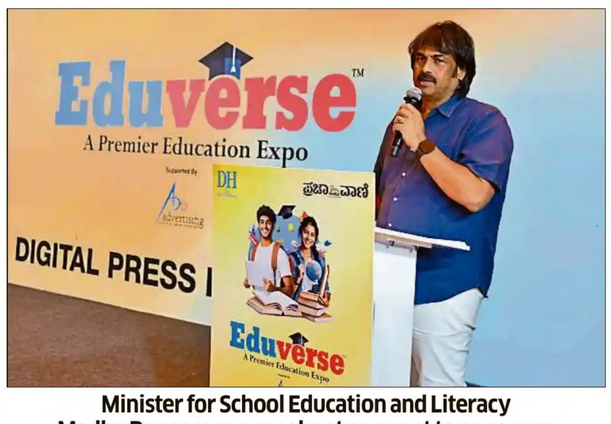
Eduverse back with 16th edition in Bengaluru and Hubballi

To help students make decisions on course & career

BENGALURU, DHNS:



Minister for School Education and Literacy Madhu Bangarappa speaks at an event to announce the DH-PV Eduverse education and career guidance expo, in Bengaluru on Tuesday. DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

The 16th edition of Eduverse, an education and career guidance expo organised by *Deccan Herald* and *Prajavani*, is set to be held in Bengaluru and Hubballi in April, bringing together leading academic institutions and career experts under one roof.

Scheduled for April 4–5 at Gayathri Grand, Palace Grounds in Bengaluru, and April 11–12 at Nehru Stadium in Hubballi, the two-day events will run from 10 am to 6 pm, with free entry for students and parents.

Eduverse 2026 is expected to host over 90 universities and institutions in Bengaluru and more than 60 in Hubballi, offering students direct access to premier colleges and admission teams.

The expo aims to help students make informed decisions through expert counselling sessions, seminars and interactive engagements. More than 10,000 students are expected to attend this year, adding to the over one lakh participants the event has engaged over the years.

The expo will showcase a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes across disciplines such as engineering, business management, artificial intelligence, data science, design, media, health sciences and law.

Career guidance for entrance exams such as CET, KCET and COMED-K will also be provided.

Students will have the opportunity to interact directly with university representatives and receive personalised advice aligned with their career goals.

Minister for School Education and Literacy Madhu Bangarappa launched the official Eduverse promo video on Tuesday.

Speaking at the event, he urged the organisers to expand the initiative to various districts across the state.

"I think universities can also start such initiatives to help students... At the government level too we're trying to encourage students. We'll soon be introducing moral science as a subject in all government schools. The books are being printed as we speak," he said, adding insight on the proposed social media ban for children up to 16 years of age in the state.

Hooch sales: Number of widows increasing, rues MLA

BENGALURU, DHNS

Lawmakers from across the parties demanded stricter action against preparation and sale of hooch, or illicit liquor, with Excise Minister R B Timmapur admitting the problem and assuring action in the Assembly on Tuesday.

Raising the issue during Question Hour, Raichur Rural Congress MLA Basanagouda Daddal said that the hooch was being prepared using 'CH powder' in his constituency, which borders Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. "Some people live off of this. Nobody has been punished or externed," he said.

Basanagouda Daddal

"Youngsters are falling prey to substance abuse. Days of anarchy aren't far if nothing is done."

Daddal asked the government to start new state-run retail liquor shops in border areas to control the menace. "The number of widows is increasing in my constituency. Hooch prepared by using the CH powder is killing a lot of people," he said.

JD(S) MLAs Karemma (Devadurga), Sharangouda Kandkur (Gurmitkal) and Tirthahalli BJP MLA Araga Jnanendra flagged the problem of illegal sale of illicit liquor. "I get calls from women who accuse us (lawmakers) of destroying their men. Illegal liquor is being sold in many homes," Jnanendra said.

Replying to this, Timmapur explained that illegal supply of liquor happens when people resell drinks bought from retail shops.

"On one hand, there's pressure that new shops shouldn't start. On the other hand, there's a need for sale in villages because drinkers are there," Timmapur said, adding that his department will work with the police to file cases.

Between 2023 and February, 2026, authorities have booked 183 cases and seized 13,557 litres of hooch, the minister said.

Timmapur described the 'CH powder' as "very dangerous" and "unfit" for human consumption. "One kg of this powder is enough to prepare a drum full of hooch. This comes (into Karnataka) from Andhra Pradesh," he said, adding that nine persons have been identified for externment.

The minister pointed out that 'CH powder' is not covered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. "We will propose this to the Union government," Timmapur said.

Vacant treasury benches: Horatti adjourns Council

Questions chief whip on the need for session

BENGALURU, DHNS

A majority of the treasury benches are empty in the Legislative Council during the afternoon session on Tuesday. DH PHOTO/M S MANJUNATH

Legislative Council Chairman Basavaraj Horatti adjourned and left the House for 10 minutes after finding that most of the treasury benches were empty at the start of the afternoon session on Tuesday.

When the session reconvened for the second half of the day around 3.15 pm, and MLC AH Vishwanath was about to speak, Horatti was disappointed that only one minister (Madhu Bangarappa) was there.

"Ministers are not there, what do I do? Ministers are needed, right? Session will be adjourned for 10 minutes."

After the House reconvened, Horatti expressed his displeasure. "Chief whip (Saleem Ahmed), if treasury bench legislators are not there, why should we have the session? Why do they come? What does this mean? I don't like it."

Horatti's move comes a day after Legislative Assembly Speaker U T Khader adjourned and left the House after being disappointed with the government for answering only 84 of the 230 unstarred questions.

While Chief Whip of the Opposition N Ravikumar rued that the government was not adequately answering questions and sought cooperation from the treasury benches, Congress MLC Ramesh Babu said the chairman was experienced enough to correct the government and urged Ravikumar to not escalate the issue.

54 answers to 221 questions on Tuesday

A day after Speaker U T Khader walked out of the Assembly, the government on Tuesday tabled only 54 answers to 221 'unstarred' questions, followed by an assurance that this will improve Wednesday onward.

"It was only on Monday that the CM issued strict directions to officials that answers must be provided. Perhaps, this will be set right from Wednesday," Home Minister G Parameshwara said. Khader read out a long list of departments to inform the Assembly how many questions they have answered.

'PU lecturers' threat to boycott evaluation akin to blackmail'

BENGALURU, DHNS: Minister for School Education and Literacy Madhu Bangarappa on Tuesday said that the pre-university lecturers' threat to boycott evaluation was equivalent to a blackmail tactic.

Responding to questions from members of both the ruling party and the opposition about the proposal to transfer powers of deputy directors of PU education (DDPU) to Zilla Panchayat chief executive officers (CEOs), Madhu said, "We have assured them that ZP CEOs will not be entrusted administrative powers, but teachers are still threatening to boycott evaluation; isn't this blackmail?"

Madhu said, "How can teachers say they don't want to evaluate answer scripts?."

Admitting that there had been discussions about transferring powers from DDPUs to ZP CEOs, Madhu said no decision had been taken.

"No such order has been issued. Also, there is no such proposal before the department," he said.

Madhu said teachers would receive the pending amount for the evaluation assignments.

"The finance department has cleared it. The money will be credited to the teachers' accounts by March 20," the minister said.

Avenues

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'Rs 100/sq ft bribe sought from builders for approvals'

BENGALURU, DHNS

Bommanahalli BJP MLA Satish Reddy on Tuesday swore on Mahatma Gandhi in the Assembly to say that a bribe of Rs 100 per sq ft was being charged to approve the construction of big apartments in Bengaluru.

"Nobody is building and construction workers have been rendered jobless," Reddy said during a debate on Bengaluru development. "There's a bribe of Rs 100 per sq ft on building plan approvals for big apartments. The Bangalore Metropolitan Region Development Authority (BMRDA) charges Rs 20 less. Let any member in this House say there's no bribery. Who gets this money? Officials? The government? Someone else?" Reddy said.

Satish Reddy

Hoskote Congress MLA Sharath Bachegowda objected to Reddy's claim. "What evidence does he have?," Bachegowda said.

To this, Satish even offered to resign if proven wrong. "I'm speaking the truth. I swear on Gandhi. I'm not lying," Reddy said.

The BJP legislator also accused the Congress government of 'cheating' Muslims by citing the example of ward delimitation in Bengaluru.

"Muslim areas have been halved and attached to other localities; 3,000 votes here and another 3,000 votes there. And, they won't field Muslims," Reddy said.

"As a BJP MLA, I helped a Muslim councillor get elected. We're not anti-Muslim. We only oppose those who are anti-national and pro-Pakistan," he said. Congress, Reddy charged, has made Muslims into a vote bank.

"The Congress has taken Muslims for granted and doesn't do their work. If there's an alternative party, Muslims won't vote for Congress. Muslims are voting Congress not out of love for the party," he said.

Tunnel Road to cost Rs 1,007 cr per km: MLA

Criticising the proposed tunnel road project, Yelahanka BJP MLA S R Vishwanath said that the government would end up spending Rs 1,007 crore per km for the 17-kilometre Esteem Mall-Silk Board stretch.

"The toll will be Rs 19 per kilometre, which will keep increasing," the legislator said.

"At the five entry-exit points of the tunnel - Esteem Mall, Mekhri Circle, Race Course, Lalbagh and Silk Board - the government will have to acquire 22.36 acres of land, worth Rs 5,000 crore," Vishwanath said.

SWR puts off exams after high-voltage protests over Kannada exclusion

12 departmental selection exams on March 17 & 18 postponed

Police detain members of the Karnataka Rakshana Vedike who were staging a protest demanding that departmental promotional exams should also be conducted in Kannada, in Bengaluru on Tuesday. DH PHOTO/B K JANARDHAN

BENGALURU, DHNS

High drama unfolded outside the divisional railway manager's (DRM) office here on Tuesday as scores of pro-Kannada organisations and aspirants protested against the South Western Railway (SWR) administration, demanding that departmental promotional exams should also be conducted in Kannada.

The agitation, directed at the conduct of the Limited Departmental Competitive Examination (LDCE), eventually forced the authorities to postpone the exam indefinitely.

Twelve departmental selection exam covering the staff of the Hubballi division and the SWR headquarters were scheduled to be held at Railway Recruitment Cell (RRC), Hubballi, on March 17 and 18.

In Hubballi, members of the Kannada Rakshana Vedike (KRV) staged a protest at the RRC office entrance, restricting the entry of candidates and examination staff.

According to the KRV, a 2025 notification initially allowed candidates to take the exam in Kannada, but a last-minute change restricted the medium of examination to only Hindi and English.

High drama at Majestic

The state capital witnessed high drama as a massive posse of police transformed the KSR Bengaluru railway station and the DRM's office into a fortress.

Despite a prohibitory notice issued by the Cottonpet police on Monday, hundreds of KRV activists, led by city president T A Dharmaraj Gowda and state general secretary B Sannirappa, attempted to storm the station. The protesters were stopped at the main gates, leading to heated arguments and scuffles with the police. Several activists, including state women's wing leader Sahana Shekhar, were detained and taken away in police vans.

"Conducting exams only in Hindi and English is a conspiracy to deprive local Kannadigas of their rightful promotions. Many 'C' and 'D' group employees are fluent only in Kannada. We will not allow this 'language imperialism' to continue," a KRV leader shouted during the stir.

"The competent authority has decided to postpone the examination. I am only the conducting officer and this is the information I have. Please cooperate and vacate the premises," the official said, addressing the agitated crowd.

While the official confirmed the postponement, he remained unclear regarding the new dates or whether the language format would be amended.

KRV state president T A Narayana Gowda told *DH* that the RRC chairman, Asif Ansari, personally confirmed the postponement of the exams over a phone call.

"This is a victory for the people of Karnataka. But our fight doesn't end here. If they attempt to reschedule the exams without including Kannada, we will shut down the entire railway network in the state," Gowda warned.

He said a delegation would meet Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw at the residence of Union Minister Pralhad Joshi in Delhi on March 21. The delegation intends to demand a permanent policy change ensuring all railway recruitment and promotion exams in the state are conducted in the local language.

While the SWR cited technical reasons and administrative exigencies for the postponement, fresh dates for the LDCE are yet to be announced. In a statement, SWR said the matter regarding the inclusion of Kannada for departmental examinations would be taken up for discussion at an appropriate level, and the decision would be made based on the outcome of such deliberations.

Tiger electrocuted at BTR buffer zone in Gundlupet taluk

GUNDLUPET (CHAMARAJANAGAR DISTRICT), DHNS: A three-year-old tiger died of electrocution at Padaguru near Adavi Mutt in the buffer zone of Bandipur Tiger Reserve Forest in the taluk on Tuesday.

According to the Forest Department officials, the tiger, which had come in search of prey, came in contact with a live wire fence around a banana plantation in the village and died.

As the villagers had complained of frequent sightings of a tiger at Padaguru and the surrounding areas, the Forest Department officials had recently placed a cage in the region.

They had also launched an operation to trace the tiger and used a thermal drone camera to monitor its movement, the Forest Department officials said.

Bandipur Conservator of Forests Prabhakaran and ACF Suresh visited the spot.

Strong Constitution kept India's political system unchanged: Prof

Prof B D Kumbar, vice chancellor of the Davangere University, addresses the gathering at the seminar 'Constitution is light' organised by Deccan Herald and Prajavani, in association with the social welfare department and the university's political science department in Davangere on Tuesday. DH PHOTO

Prof Ashok Kumar Paled, head of the political science department of Davangere University, said on Tuesday that the political system had remained unchanged in India since independence due to its strong Constitution. But neighbouring countries like Pakistan and Sri Lanka had witnessed a change in the system.

He was delivering the keynote address at the seminar 'Constitution is light' organised by Deccan Herald and Prajavani, in association with the social welfare department and the university's political science department here.

The professor said India had the largest democracy in the world due to the diversity in the country.

"We have multiple cultures, languages and traditions, unlike other countries. So, Dr B R Ambedkar gave us a Constitution that suited each citizen of the country".

Referring to the vachana literature, Paled said, "Many vachanas composed in the 12th century mirrored the principles of our Constitution. The vachana composers tried to eradicate inequalities from the society through their vachanas. The concept of welfare state is there in the Constitution too".

Quoting former chief minister and socialist leader, the late J H Patel, Paled said Brahmins had got freedom and social equality much earlier in the society.

Similarly, Lingayats got it in 12th century. But people of the remaining communities got freedom and social equality in the true sense on January 26, 1950, the day the Constitution came into effect.

Inaugurating the event, university vice chancellor Prof B D Kumbar suggested students to read the copy of the Indian Constitution, which is available in all libraries.

He said Ambedkar had faced many challenges and insults in life. Nevertheless, he reached great heights and became the chief architect of the Constitution.

"But youths in the current society have forgotten about his sacrifices. They must read about it without fail and understand it," Kumbar said.

Referring to the abrogation of Article 370 - which stripped Jammu and Kashmir of its special status, autonomy and separate Constitution - by the Centre in 2019, he said if it had not been done, Jammu & Kashmir would not have witnessed development.

"Common people of the country would not have been able to visit the state," he said.

Kumbar asked students to discharge their duties mentioned in the Constitution also, while exercising their rights.

Social welfare department assistant director Hanumantappa Lamani said the Constitution had given equal rights to all citizens. Above all, it had given the right to live anywhere in the country and security of life to all citizens.

He said many from the underprivileged classes had gained key positions in society only because of the Constitution.

Earlier in the day, hundreds of students of the university took part in a walkathon on the campus. They raised the slogans 'Constitution is light,' 'Our Constitution, our pride'.

Prajavani Davangere bureau chief Siddaiah Hiremath, Deccan Herald, Prajavani circulation manager for Davangere Nandagopal, advertisement department assistant general manager Pramod Bhagvath and other staffers were present.

CONSTITUTION IS LIGHT

Curated by DH DECCAN HERALD | ಪ್ರಜಾವಾಣಿ

An Initiative by:

SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT
For the Educational, Social & Economic Upliftment of Scheduled Castes

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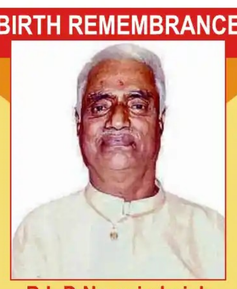
BIRTH REMEMBRANCE



B.L.D.Narasimhaiah
18-03-1940 to 04-09-2025
In fond remembrance on your Birthday
We miss you

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

JULIET ARUJAH
Passed away peacefully on 15 March - 2026
Beloved mother / mother-in-law, grandmother, sister, and aunt, she was a source of kindness, strength, and quiet grace.
Funeral Mass: 18th March 2026 at 14: 00 hrs at St Patrick's Church, Brigade Road, Ashok Nagar, Bangalore-560025.

25th Death Anniversary
In Ever Loving memory of

P M Maria Dass
DOB: 01-01-1939 DOD: 18-03-2001
"25 years ago, the world lost a beautiful soul, and I lost my guiding light. Still loving and missing you"
The love between a father and child does not end with death. Your lessons still guide me every day".
From Beloved Wife Maria Rose, daughters, son, daughter in law & grand daughters.
Mob: 7259999940

Siddaramaiah slams 'injustice' to Kannadigas

BENGALURU, DHNS

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah slammed 'injustice' to Kannadiga jobseekers in union government examinations.

In an X post, the chief minister said the Centre had a 'devious' agenda of Hindi imposition in recruitment for various central departments.

Siddaramaiah wrote: "While Kannadigas have been fighting for justice, it is deeply unfortunate that the railways has taken an anti-Kannada stance and caused injustice to Kannada, Karnataka, and its people at a time when V Somanna, a Kannadiga himself, is the Minister of State for Railways.

"I too had hoped that Somanna would stand up for Kannadigas and rectify this injustice, but that trust has been betrayed. When Somanna starts speaking, he builds a 'palace of words' as if the entire railways exists only for Karnataka. He needs to talk less and focus on working sincerely for the state.

"Kannadigas are already suffering the ill-effects of the union government's love for Hindi and its dismissive attitude toward regional languages, including Kannada. We cannot tolerate the Centre's 'linguistic tyranny', which allows only Hindi and English in central exams solely to benefit Hindi speakers from North India."

He urged the union government to ensure Kannada speakers are not subjected to 'injustice' in the name of language in the coming days.

He sought Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention to issue strict instructions to the concerned departments. He demanded that the cancelled exams be conducted soon with an opportunity to take them in Kannada.

Purushottama Bilimale, Chairman of the Kannada Development Authority (KDA), urged all MPs representing Karnataka to pressure the union government to conduct competitive exams for recruitment and promotions in the Indian Railways in all regional languages, including Kannada.

In a formal letter addressed to the MPs, Bilimale noted that the current unavailability of railway recruitment and promotion exams in Kannada has caused significant discontent among language enthusiasts and aspirants in the state.

JUMPING JOY

Government primary school children participate in a sack race at Hiremagalur in Chikkamagaluru district on Tuesday. PTI PHOTO

No industry leaving state over poor infrastructure: Minister

BENGALURU, DHNS

Minister for Urban Development B S 'Byrathi' Suresha asserted that no industry or investor had left Karnataka citing the poor infrastructure in the state.

Responding to BJP MLC N Ravi Kumar's claims that industries were moving out of the state because they were dissatisfied with the facilities provided by the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB), Suresha told the Council: "Companies have moved out or closed down for other reasons, including losses they have incurred. Till date, no industry or investor has left Karnataka citing problems with the state's infrastructure."

Replying to the queries on behalf of Industries Minister M B Patil, Suresha informed the Council that as many as 2,028 projects cumulatively worth Rs 5,11,732.88 crore had been approved in the state in the past three years.

"These projects can generate 7,16,148 jobs. In only the last two years, KIADB has allotted 2,954.52 acres to 1,445 companies," said Suresha.

When Ravi Kumar pointed out that Toyota had set up its unit in Maharashtra, Suresha said, "Toyota has not moved out of Karnataka but is merely setting up another branch in Maharashtra. K'taka houses Toyota's biggest plant in Bidadi."

Co-operative Apex Bank comes under RTI ambit: Info commission

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Karnataka Information Commission has ruled that the Karnataka State Co-operative Apex Bank qualifies as a 'public authority' under the Right to Information Act, 2005, and directed the bank to comply with provisions of the transparency law.

Rajashekara S, State Information Commissioner, passed the order after hearing a second appeal filed by Hanumantha Vasanth Shinde, who had sought copies of documents submitted by Nirani Sugars Limited, while taking loans from the bank between March 2022 and June 2024.

The bank had declined the request, stating that it was a cooperative society and therefore not covered under the RTI Act.

During the course of the hearing, the bank argued that it was neither owned nor substantially financed by the state government and therefore did not fall within the definition of 'public authority' under Section 2(h) of the RTI Act.

However, the information commissioner rejected the argument, observing that the institution functions under deep and pervasive state control.

In its order, the commission observed that the Registrar of Cooperative Societies serves as an ex officio director on the bank's board and retains statutory powers to inspect records, conduct inquiries and order audits. Further, audit reports of apex cooperative institutions are required to be submitted to the state government and placed before the legislature.

The commission directed Apex Bank to appoint Public Information Officers (PIOs) and First Appellate Authorities (FAAs) across its offices. It also instructed the Principal Secretary of the Cooperation Department and the Registrar of Cooperative Societies to ensure that the bank implements the RTI framework without delay.

◆ WEATHER ◆

Overview: Dry weather prevailed over Coastal Karnataka, South Interior Karnataka and North Interior Karnataka
Forecast March 18: Dry weather likely to prevail over the state.

INTERIOR NORTH			
Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Belagavi	34.4	19	00
Bidar	34.5	21.5	00
Vijayapura	36	20.5	00
Dharwad	34.6	19.8	00
Haveri	35.6	19	00
Kalaburagi	38	22.2	00
Raichur	36.2	21	00
COASTAL			
Honnavar	32.6	22.3	00
Karwar	34.6	23.6	00
Shirali	NA	NA	NA
Mangaluru	33.8	24	0.3

INTERIOR SOUTH			
Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Agumbe	31.8	NA	NA
Bengaluru	32.8	21.4	TR
Ballari	NA	NA	NA
Chamarajanagar	NA	NA	NA
Chikkamagaluru	NA	NA	NA
Chitradurga	34.1	19.4	10.1
Davangere	34.5	17.5	04
Hassan	34.2	14	48.5
Mysuru	34.6	17	00
Madikeri	NA	NA	NA
Kolar	33.6	19.4	00
OTHER STATIONS			
New Delhi	32.2	15.8	00
Kolkata	34.4	19.6	00
Mumbai	31.7	22.1	00
Chennai	33.9	24.3	00
Pune	35.4	16	00
Hyderabad	36	22.4	00
Th'puram	34.7	25	00

Rising beer prices push youths towards ganja: MLC

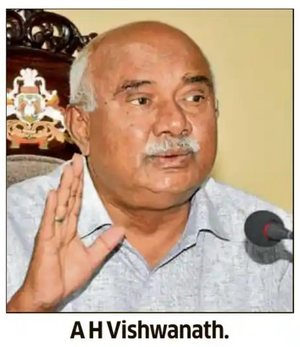
BENGALURU, DHNS

MLC A H Vishwanath claimed on Tuesday that rising beer prices had pushed youths towards ganja.

Speaking in the Legislative Council on the Budget, Vishwanath said: "How many times do you increase the excise tax?? A beer bottle costs Rs 230 now. Increasing excise tax is not good for the society. CM also knows, we studied together. We used to get beer for Rs 2... Unable to purchase beer, youths have gone for ganja. Why are you taxing liquor and killing the youths? This is very dangerous."

'Addiction'

Referring to the Rs 45,000 crore revenue target set by the government on the Excise Department for the year 2026-27, Vishwanath said: "I won't say you have to ban, you cannot also. But this (increasing the excise duty) shouldn't be done. Because, this is an addiction. In villages, some farmers in the field may have beedi but no matchbox and for that they will go two kms. This is an addiction."



A H Vishwanath.

SC: Can't deny maternity leave over adoptive kid's age

Maternity, From Page 1

The court's judgment came on a writ petition filed by Hamsaanandini Nanduri, an adoptive mother of two children, who contended the distinction in the Code was artificial and violative of Article 14. She contended the provision was arbitrary, unreasonable and discriminatory not only towards the mother but also towards the child above the age of three months.

Agreeing to the submission, the bench held, the right of reproductive autonomy is not confined to the biological act of giving birth.

"Adoption is an equal exercise of the right to reproductive and decisional autonomy under Article 21 of the Constitution," the bench said.

The court pointed out the process of adjustment and integration within the adoptive family, both for the parents as well as the child, remains substantially the same irrespective of the age of the child.

The classification overlooks the significant emotional, psychological and practical adjustments required of the adoptive parents and the adopted child, more particularly, in cases involving children with disabilities or single adoptive mothers, it said.

In matters affecting a child, the bench pointed out, the paramount consideration must be given to the best interests of the child. "The true fulfilment of the child's welfare lies in enabling the child to meaningfully adjust, bond and flourish within the family environment," the bench said.

Finding that the provision turns out to be incapable of practical implementation, the bench noted, with regard to the time required to declare a child legally free for adoption, and by the time such declaration is made, the child is unlikely to be of less than three months old. "Thus, the age limit renders the provision illusory and devoid of practical application," the bench said.

The bench said the sub-section (4) of Section 60 of the 2020 Code should now be meaningfully read as, "A woman who legally adopts a child or a commissioning mother shall be entitled to maternity benefit for a period of twelve weeks from the date the child is handed over to the adopting mother or the commissioning mother, as the case may be."

Around 11 million graduates unemployed: Report

Unemployed, From Page 1

The report further noted that only a small share of youth secure stable salaried jobs within a year of graduation.

"The report traces the journey of a young worker — from education to job search and employment, and how this transition has evolved over the last 40 years," said Rosa Abraham, lead author of the report and Associate Professor of Economics at the Azim Premji University. The expansion of higher education institutions has played a significant role in the surge in the number of graduates in the country. College availability in India increased from 29 per lakh youth in 2010 to 45 per lakh youth in 2021, mainly driven by private institutions.

Israel: Iran security chief Larijani killed

Iran, From Page 1

After the war broke out, he became even more powerful. While the new supreme leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, has not been seen in public since he was appointed to replace his slain father, Larijani was seen walking with crowds at a pro-government rally last week in Tehran.

The reported assassination comes as strikes shook countries across the Middle East on Tuesday, from Gulf nations to Iraq, Lebanon and Iran.

An AFP reporter had earlier Tuesday reported blasts in Tehran, after a night of heavy bombardment mixed with thunder and rain. Shortly after Israel said it had killed him, Larijani's official social media profiles posted a handwritten note by him paying tribute to Iranian sailors killed when a US submarine sunk an Iranian frigate this month.

The note was not dated, nor did the post address the claim of his death, which Iran has not confirmed.

Israel also said on Tuesday it had killed Gholamreza Soleimani, head of the Basij paramilitary force of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, in a strike on Monday in Tehran.

And it said it had targeted Akram al-Ajouri, head of the military wing of the group Palestinian Islamic Jihad, in a strike in Iran, though he was not confirmed dead.

Israel has since the October 7, 2023, attacks by Hamas pursued what analysts have described as a policy of decapitation, targeting the leaders of its enemies, including Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah in Lebanon, as well as top leaders in Gaza. The whereabouts of Iran's new supreme leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, is the subject of much speculation, and US President Donald Trump said Monday that "we don't know... if he's dead or not".

Coffee growers meet Minister Piyush Goyal, seek relief

NEW DELHI, DHNS: A delegation of coffee growers from Karnataka, led by Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel HD Kumaraswamy, met Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal here and sought relief for their problems, including those caused by the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (SARFAESI Act).

"The small and medium coffee farmers have been hit hard by the SARFAESI Act. They do not have the money to fight in court against the banks and foreign bidders participating in online auctions," the growers apprised Goyal on Monday.

The coffee growers have already lost many properties due to the SARFAESI Act. A request has also been submitted to the finance minister in this regard, the growers explained, a statement said. During the meeting, the exploration of new markets for exports, the improvement of coffee yield, and providing incentives to growers were also discussed. Goyal assured them that he would take up the issue of the SARFAESI Act with the Ministry of Finance.

Goyal also responded positively to their other demands, Kumaraswamy said in the statement.

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Forecast March 18: Dry weather likely to prevail over the state.

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Shirali	NA	NA	NA
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INTERIOR SOUTH

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Bengaluru	32.8	21.4	TR
Ballari	NA	NA	NA
Chamarajanagar	NA	NA	NA
Chikkamagaluru	NA	NA	NA
Chitradurga	34.1	19.4	10.1
Davangere	34.5	17.5	04
Hassan	34.2	14	48.5
Mysuru	34.6	17	00
Madikeri	NA	NA	NA
Kolar	33.6	19.4	00

OTHER STATIONS

New Delhi	32.2	15.8	00
Kolkata	34.4	19.6	00
Mumbai	31.7	22.1	00
Chennai	33.9	24.3	00
Pune	35.4	16	00
Hyderabad	36	22.4	00
Th'puram	34.7	25	00

Karnataka to become new unit in RSS' rejig plan

New organisational structure is expected to kick in by 2027

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has decided to make Karnataka a new standalone unit under a major structural reorganisation as the Hindu nationalist body looks to expand its footprint.

The new organisational structure is expected to kick in by 2027, in time for the 2028 Karnataka Assembly elections. At present, the provinces (*prant*) of Karnataka Uttar, Karnataka Dakshin, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana are grouped under one *kshetra.*

"Akin to the government system, every state will become a *pradesh*. Accordingly, Karnataka will function as a new *pradesh*," Kshetriya Karyavah N Thippeswamy said.

The RSS has decided to do away with provinces and create smaller divisions (*sambhag*). Across India, the 46 existing provinces will become 85 divisions. "Accordingly, Karnataka will have four *sambhagas* - Bengaluru, Mysuru, Hubballi and Mangaluru," Thippeswamy said. "The new reorganisation will help with the expansion and improvement of the RSS' activities," he added.

RSS Kshetriya Karyavah N Thippeswamy

Presence

The number of daily *shakhas* (camps) stood at 4,127 in 2025-26, Thippeswamy told a news conference on the recently concluded RSS Akhila Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha (ABPS).

More than 19.61 lakh people attended 2,194 Hindu Samajotsavas that were organised in Karnataka to mark the RSS' centenary, Thippeswamy said. A total of 562 route marches (*pathasanchalan*) were held with a participation of 2.21 lakh people.

The RSS covered 48.68 lakh households as part of its outreach, Thippeswamy said. A total of 7,262 Vijayadashami events were held in which 2.77 lakh people took part, he added. Nationally, the RSS has 88,949 daily *shakhas* across 55,683 locations.

Govt waiting for report on arecanut: Minister

BENGALURU, DHNS: The government on Tuesday informed the Legislative Council that it is awaiting for the final report from M S Ramaiah University, Bengaluru on 'Assessment of Phytochemical and Pesticide Components for Arecanut - Measurement of Health Safety and Efficacy'. Replying to a question by BJP MLC Pratap Simha Nayak, Agriculture Minister N Chaluvarayaswamy, on behalf of Horticulture Minister S S Mallikarjun, informed the House that the government is waiting for the final research study report to initiate action.

Shipping & LPG crises cripple B'luru MSMEs

MSMEs, From Page 1

"Our estimated time of arrival (ETA) for specific customers is being delayed by two to three weeks," a source from a major automotive precision manufacturing firm in Peenya said. "This is causing an acute shortage at the customer's end in Europe."

The impact is hitting global giants. Components destined for Volvo, Magneti Marelli, and Stellantis (the parent group of brands like Jeep, Fiat and Maserati) are currently stuck in transit or sitting in 40-foot containers on the factory floors.

"Exports happen weekly and even daily. For UD Trucks and Volvo, it's about 6 to 7 tonnes weekly. For Stellantis, it is every 15 days and we load a full container of about 11–12 tonnes for them. Our 40-foot containers carry about 17 to 21 tonnes to Europe," the source added.

The financial implications are huge. "If a customer's production line stops for even two hours because the parts didn't arrive, they will penalise us for the loss. That cost can be as high as Rs 45 lakh," the source added. "We have to bear it. We can't tell a global OEM that we don't have gas or a ship."

The shortage isn't just affecting the machines; it's affecting the workforce. At CNC Technologies, while the machines run on electricity, the canteen, which feeds over 100 workers, is running out of fuel. "We need about 10 cylinders a month for the canteen. We have stock for a couple of more days. If the supply doesn't come by then, we don't know how we will serve our workers," said Sandeep Parvathikar, Director of CNC.

OUR RESPECTS ON THE
32nd ANNIVERSARY

4-10-1907 - 18-3-1994

YADALAM S. GOPALAKRISHNA SETTY

Arjuna, if you should suppose this soul to be subject to constant birth and death, even then you should not grieve like this. (26)

- BHAGAWAD GEETA

YADALAM FAMILY

SRI KRISHNA SPINNING & WEAVING MILLS PVT. LTD.,
GOPALAKRISHNA TEXTILE MILLS PVT. LTD.
SUBRAMANYAPURA, BANGALORE

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, DEPARTMENT OF SPACE
U.R. RAO SATELLITE CENTRE
CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE GROUP
HAL Airport Road, Bengaluru - 560 017
(Phone: 080 25084184, 4156)
BRIEF E-TENDER NOTICE

Sl. No	Description	Details
1	Name of work	Horizontal Extension of Rendezvous Simulation Lab at ISITE Campus, URSC, Marathahalli, Bengaluru (Civil, Electrical, Airconditioning and other allied works)
2	E-Tender Notice No.	URSC/C&MG/C/C/12/2025-26, Dt.16/03/2026
3	Estimated cost put to Tender	₹ 224.23 Lakhs
4	Period of completion	Ten Months
5	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	₹ 4,48,460/- valid for 180 days

Interested tenderers may please refer Detailed Notice Inviting E-Tender (NIET) for eligibility criteria and other details along with Hindi version in website: www.isro.gov.in and download the tender documents from www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO.

Sd/-
Group Director, C&MG, URSC

SHIVAMOGGA, DAVANAGERE & CHITRADURGA DISTRICT CO-OPERATIVE MILK PRODUCER'S KALYANA TRUST ®,
MACHENAHALLI, NIDIGE (POST), SHIVAMOGGA– 577222
Ph: 7760971922 e-mail: shimulkalyanatrust@gmail.com www.shimul.coop
No.SDCKT/Staff M.C/E-TENDER/ 6945 /2025-26
KMF/2025-26/SE5022 Date:16.03.2026
MPCS STAFF & MILK DEALERS GROUP MEDICLAIM INSURANCE

E- TENDER

Shivamogga, Davanagere & Chitradurga District Co-Operative Milk PRODUCERS KALYANA TRUST ®.,(SDCKT) Shivamogga, invites E-Tender from the interested IRDA registered General Insurance companies to provide Group Mediclaim insurance for MPCS STAFF & MILK DEALERS for the period of 2026 to 2027 on an annual rate contract basis.

ANNUAL RATE CONTRACT

Sl. No.	PARTICULARS	Approx Value (Rs in lakhs)	EMD (in Rs)
1	Group Mediclaim Insurance for Mpcs Staff & Milk Dealers of shivamogga, davanagere & chitradurga district co-operative milk producers kalyana trust ®., for the period 2026 to 2027	20.00	15,000

TIME SCHEDULE OF E-TENDER: (1) Access to E-tender Documents: 17.03.2026 TO 02.04.2026 Up to 15:00 PM. (2) Last date for submission of tender: 02.04.2026 Up to 17:00 PM. (3) Date & time for opening Technical Tender Part-1: 04.04.2026 Up to 11:00 AM. (4) Date & time for opening Commercial Tender Part-II: 06.04.2026 Up to 11:00 AM.

The bidder may download the tender documents with along Technical Specifications & terms and conditions of the tender by paying prescribedKarnataka Public Procurement portal fees. The details regarding participation for this tender can be obtained by logging on to https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in and www.shimul.coop Any additional information regarding tender may be obtained from this office during office hours & working days.

Sd/- Chief Executive Officer,
SDCKT Shivamogga

KARNATAKA STATE MINERALS CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
Regd. Office : TTMC 'A' Block 5th Floor, BMTC Building, KH Road, Shanthinagar, Bengaluru-560027.
Phone: 080-22278813/14/15/16, Fax : 080-22213172
Website: https://ksmc.karnataka.gov.in
No.150/KSMCL/MECH/BKW&NDM/BHL Call II/2025-26 Date: 17.03.2026

SHORT TERM E-TENDER INVITATION

KSMCL Invites Short Term E-tender for Purchase of BACKHOE LOADER 02 Numbers to BAGESHPURA CLAY MINES, ARASIKERE Tq., HASSAN District and NEERALAKERI DOLOMITE Mines BAGALAKOTE Dist., Karnataka.

CALENDER OF EVENTS

Commencement to Download from website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in	17.03.2026
Last date for receiving the queries through e-procurement portal	19.03.2026 up to 11:00 am
Last date and Time for uploading e-tender in E-Procurement platform on or before	24.03.2026 up to 10:30 am
The Technical bid will be opened online by the Authorized officers on	26.03.2026 At 11:45 am
Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	Rs.1,72,000/-.

Tender documents may be downloaded from e-procurement GOK Platform website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in Contact for any support in uploading & registration, E-procurement Helpdesk: 080-46010000/ 68948777.

DIPR/CP/6325/AKAR/2025-26

Sd/-
General Manager (P)

KARNATAKA HOUSING BOARD
3rd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009.

Tender Notification
(Through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal only)

Karnataka Housing Board has invited tenders through KPP Portal for Appointment of Architectural and Engineering Firms (AEF) for the work of Proposed Construction of 10 Engineering Boys/Girls Hostels at various places in Karnataka for Backward Classes Welfare Department under Deposit Contribution works.

Notification No: CE/KHB/2025-26/SE0359 to KHB/2025-26/SE0363 Dated: 13.03.2026

Last date for submission of bid is on 27.03.2026 upto 4.00 PM

For further information, contact below mentioned office address: Executive Engineer, Karnataka Housing Board, Cauvery Bhavan, Bengaluru. Telephone No: 080-22273511/080-22100077, Website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

DIPR/CP/6315/AKAR/2025-26

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Karnataka Housing Board, Bengaluru

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
ZILLA PANCHAYATH, BELLARY
Office of the Executive Engineer, P.R.E. Division, Bellary.
No.EE/PRED/BLY/AE-1/Various Heads/2025-26/2111 Dt. 16-03-2026.

Short Tender Notification (Through KPPP Portal only)

On behalf of Hon'ble Governor of Karnataka tenders are invited from the eligible contractors who have enrolled in Panchayath Raj Engineering Department for 17 works comprising of approved Road, Bridge and Building works under 2025-26 CMIDP Works, 2025-26 KKRDB, 2022-23 TSP Grant,2024-25 5054 Flood and 2025-26 5054 SCP/TSP Grant through KPPP portal.

Indent No.
1.RDPR/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT25650
2.RDPR/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT25649
3.RDPR/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT25648
4.RDPR/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT25647
5.RDPR/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT25645
6.RDPR/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT25646
7.RDPR/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT25644
8.RDPR/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT25643
9.RDPR/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT25642
10.RDPR/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT25652
11.RDPR/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT25651
12.RDPR/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT22811/CALL-3
13.RDPR/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT25450
14.RDPR/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT24749/CALL-2
15.RDPR/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT25021/Call-2
16.RDPR/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT25657
17.RDPR/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT25463

Contractors are required to submit the tender before 25-03-2026 at 4.30 PM by uploading the relevant documents through KPPP portal website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in by downloading the formats for submission of tenders from 16-03-2026 to 25-03-2026 at 4.30 PM. Tenders will be opened through KPPP portal on 26-03-2026 at 5.30 PM. Any changes in the notification will be published KPPP website only. Accepting/rejection of tenders without assigning reason is reserved. Any details can be obtained in person at the office or through telephone No. 08392-266173.

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Panchayath Raj Engineering Division Ballari
DIPR/Ballari/1152/KSMCA/2025-26

BENGALURU CENTRAL CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer, Shanthinagar Division, P.U. Building, 9th Floor, M.G. Road, Bengaluru-560 001.
No:EE/SN/TEND/25/2025-26 Date: 17.03.2026

Invitation for Tender (IFT) (Call-2)
(Two Cover System) (Only through KPP Portal)
website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

The Executive Engineer (Shanthinagar Division), Bengaluru Central City Corporation, invites Tenders from eligible tenderers registered in Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike/KPWD/CPWD/ Railways/MES any State or Central Govt. Organisation for the works details in the table given below.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work / Category
1.	Filling up of Pot holes in ward no 166 Shanthinagara for the year 2025-26, (Others). Approx. Amount put to tender (₹ in Lakhs) : 20.00, EMD (in ₹) 50,000/-.
2.	Filling up of Pot holes in Ward No. 167 Ashoknagara for the year 2025-26, (Others). Approx. Amount put to tender (₹ in Lakhs) : 20.00, EMD (in ₹) 50,000/-.
3.	Filling up of Pot holes in Ward No. 168 Neelasandra for the year 2025-26, (Others). Approx. Amount put to tender (₹ in Lakhs) : 20.00, EMD (in ₹) 50,000/-.
4.	Annual Maintenance of Ward and Desilting of Drains in Ward No. 167 Ashoknagara for the year 2025-26, (Others). Approx. Amount put to tender (₹ in Lakhs) : 30.00, EMD (in ₹) 75,000/-.
5.	Annual Maintenance of ward and Desilting of Drains in Ward No. 172 Agaram for the year 2025-26 , (Others). Approx. Amount put to tender (₹ in Lakhs) : 30.00, EMD (in ₹) 75,000/-.

Calendar of Events: (1) Pre bid meeting will be held on 23.03.2026 at 3:30 p.m. (2) Last date for submission of tender documents on or before 26.03.2026 at 4:00 p.m. (3) Technical Bids will be opened on 27.03.2026 at 4:30 p.m.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Shanthinagar Division, BCCC.

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
MANGALURU DIVISION MANGALURU
Ref :PWD:MD:TND:(57E/46E/39E): 2025-26:JE-1 Dated: 16.03.2026

SHORTERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Karnataka Public E-Procurement Portal) /2nd Call

The Executive Engineer, PWD, Division. Mangaluru Inviting Tender under K.P.P Portal www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in from eligible Tenderers in accordance with KTPP Act Indent No: 34066, 34120 under the Head of Account 8443 Disaster Relief Fund, and under the Hon'ble Chief Minister's Infrastructure Development Programme (CMIDP) – Indent No: 32076 (2nd Call) For the above works, tenders have been invited and the last date for submission of tenders is fixed as 24.03.2026 (up to 5:00 PM only).

In the above work lowest cost of estimate is Rs.100.00 Lakhs & highest cost of estimate is Rs. 105.00 Lakhs. Tenders for the above works are invited as per the Standard Tender Document –KW-3. Further details such as value of work, amount put to tender, EMD etc., can be accessed on the KPP Portal at www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in. Further, for more details can contact O/o, Case Worker, Executive Engineer's Office, PWD, Mangaluru Division, Mangaluru during official working hours. Contact No: 0824-2423169.

DIPR/DK/KSMCA/1761/25-26 dt.16.03.2026

Sd/- Executive Engineer

KIDWAI MEMORIAL INSTITUTE OF ONCOLOGY,
Cancer Research & Training Centre
GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA AUTONOMOUS INSTITUTION (Regional Centre of Cancer Research & Treatment Member of International Union Against Cancer)
Dr. M.H. Marigowda Road, Bangalore-560029
Ph: +91 080-2656 0722/2656 0723, 080-6669 7999

No:KMIO/ACCT/Tender/FD/499/2025-26 Date:17-03-2026

e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTIFICATION

Online Tenders are invited in Two Bid System for the following through GOK KPP Portal tender for Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology.

Sl No.	Tender No. & Date	Name of the Items
1	KMIO/ACCT/Tender/FD/499/2025-26, Dt: 17.03.2026	e-Auction of Fixed Deposit Callable (Estimated Budget: 60 Cr Approx.)
2	KMIO/ACCT/Tender/FD/500/2025-26, Dt: 17.03.2026	e-Auction of Fixed Deposit Non-Callable (Estimated Budget: 40 Cr Approx.)
3	KMIO/SME(1)/Tender/Drugs/502/2025-26, Dt: 17.03.2026	Supply of Drugs to KMIO
4	KMIO/SME(1)/Tender/Laundry/451/2025-26, Dt: 17.03.2026 (Call-3)	Out Sourcing of Laundry Services at KMIO (Estimated Budget: 90 Lakh)

The Bid Document will be available in online for Sl. No. 1 to 2 from 18-03-2026 to 24-03-2026, for Sl. No. 3 to 4 from 18-03-2026 to 18-04-2026. Bidders can view and download the Bid Document from the Website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in Bids have to be submitted through e-Procurement Portal and e-procurement Portal fees. The last date and time of Receipt of Bid through e-Procurement Portal is 24-03-2026 & 18-04-2026 till 4:00 P.M. Tender Accepting Authority reserves the right to accept/reject/cancel the tender without assigning any reason thereof.

DIPR/SI/6326/2025-26

Sd/-
Financial Advisor

DECCAN HERALD
ESTABLISHED 1948

Detention revoked, questions unanswered

Sonam Wangchuk's unconditional release, after six months of preventive detention, raises questions about the validity of his detention and the limited application of citizens' rights in this case. The climate activist was detained in September 2025 for leading protests demanding statehood for Ladakh and constitutional safeguards for the region's fragile ecology and the rights of its indigenous population. He has been released, ostensibly to "restore" peace and conditions for dialogue. Wangchuk was held under the draconian National Security Act (NSA) on charges of leading an "anti-national" agitation, alleged Pakistani links, suspicious foreign visits, and "financial irregularities". These charges have now disappeared without explanation. That they were framed against a noted activist leading a peaceful agitation places similar charges raised against others under the scanner.

Wangchuk was released three days before the Supreme Court was to resume hearing on a habeas corpus petition filed by his wife. This raises the question of whether the administration acted to avoid releasing him after a court order. The Court, while examining the fairness of the detention procedures and the translations of Wangchuk's speeches to verify their "provocative" nature, had raised questions regarding the arrest. It also said the government may have read too much into his speeches. Considering the Court's observations and the seemingly arbitrary nature of the detention and release, the case appeared to be on weak ground. At the centre of the issue is a disturbing absence of procedural accountability that allows a person to be detained for six months and released without a credible explanation for the change in position. This sends out a worrying signal to the citizen; this reveals the ease with which arrests and releases can be made, without the court or the accused being allowed an opportunity to conclusively test the veracity of the charges. It is also worth noting that prolonged proceedings in the Court deferred justice in a case that involved a citizen's right to life and liberty.

The Sonam Wangchuk case exposes gaps in procedural accountability and threats to civil liberties

Wangchuk's release does not mark the end of the case or render the underlying issues irrelevant. Though the petition is technically infructuous now, the case is yet to be decided. The Court has previously held that release does not automatically end a case of illegal detention and has ordered compensation to the detainees. It should define Wangchuk's detention in clear judicial terms. The Court's position in this case should ensure safeguards against unlawful detention and deter governments from initiating processes that cannot stand legal scrutiny.

Airport push must pass viability test

The renewed push to build an airport in Ballari has again brought to the fore a familiar dilemma in infrastructure planning: should such projects be guided by economic viability or by political optics? The discussion assumes urgency as the Karnataka government prepares to hold a meeting between Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and legislators from Ballari, Vijayanagara, and Koppal to explore the possibility of establishing a common airport for the region. The proposal deserves careful consideration, but it must not be reduced to a prestige contest among districts. Airports are among the most capital-intensive public infrastructure projects. Once built, they demand continuous expenditure on maintenance, security, and navigation systems. If passenger demand is weak, such facilities quickly turn into white elephants.

Unfortunately, the experience of India's regional aviation programme offers ample evidence of this risk. The UDAN Scheme was launched to democratise air travel by connecting smaller cities. While it brought nearly a hundred airports onto the aviation map, many were reduced to silent terminals once the initial subsidy period ended. Under the scheme, airlines receive viability gap funding for only three years. When this support expires, carriers operating on thin margins often withdraw from routes that cannot sustain commercial operations. Across the country, several airports built with great fanfare now see little or no traffic. The pattern is visible even in Karnataka. Airports in Mysuru and Shivamogga handle just a handful of services, while Kalaburagi has struggled to maintain consistent connectivity. These examples highlight that airports cannot thrive merely because they are built; they survive only when passenger demand justifies their existence. This is why the suggestion of creating a single, strategically located airport to serve Ballari, Vijayanagara, and Koppal merits attention. A consolidated regional hub, accessible to neighbouring districts and even parts of Andhra Pradesh, would concentrate passenger traffic and improve the chances of commercial sustainability. Building airports for each district may satisfy local pride, but it risks repeating the costly mistakes seen elsewhere.

Passenger demand and economic sustainability should shape the Ballari airport proposal

The Karnataka government's proposal to extend the subsidy framework and develop its own civil aviation policy is welcome. However, policy reform alone will not suffice unless infrastructure decisions are grounded firmly in rigorous feasibility studies. Many airports have been built in places where road and rail connectivity are excellent, making air travel an unnecessary and more expensive option. Infrastructure must serve people, not political symbolism. Airports will truly take flight only when they are economic gateways that sustain connectivity and growth. They must be built on viability, not vanity.

OPTICS WITHOUT OUTCOMES

The looming death of diplomacy

Strategic interests steer international diplomacy, but safe silences must not legitimise US transgressions in West Asia

PRASENJIT CHOWDHURY

Just at a time we are about to mourn that Prime Minister Narendra Modi missed a shot at global recognition by not making use of his friendship with the United States President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu – often expressed in intimate forms of hugging, hand-holding, and other chummy ways – to stop the raging war in West Asia, here comes a small window. Frankly, no one can seriously believe that the PM, acting as a peace broker, would get a leveller to get even with Trump, proclaiming for the umpteenth time that he stopped a nuclear war between India and Pakistan.

Two weeks into the war, experts believe Modi can play a role. "To stop the US-Israel-Iran war, we need an intermediary, and preferably, the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi," Colonel Douglas MacGregor, a retired US military official, said in a podcast with Tucker Carlson. The UAE's former envoy to India, Hussain Hassan Mirza, in an interview with *India Today TV*, suggested that Modi was the best person to help end the war. "PM Modi has good relations with Iran and Israel. India is not involved in this war in any way. India is a neutral state and the only neutral state that is growing in stature, power, and influence," Colonel MacGregor said. To show the world that India is not anyone's stooge, and to give mettle to its stance of strategic autonomy, and its apparent neutrality, it is time for the PM to act.

If he cannot act based on the imperatives of strategic autonomy – even if those transgressions include kidnapping a head of state as in Venezuela, or assassinating the top religious leader of a sovereign nation as in Iran – then symbolic optics of gratuitous intimacy become meaningless. Such optics often create an illusion of statesmanship for a leader who has the wherewithal to stop a war. While the tragic truth of international diplomacy is that we are all bound by a complex web of strategic interests and mutual misdeeds, we cannot turn a blind eye to the consequences of a long list of US actions in West Asia: killing innocent schoolchildren; the sinking of an Iranian ship; unending bombing of the Iraqi people; support to despotic regimes; and pandering to the military whims of a nation, destroying many.

To be fair, India criticised Iran in the IAEA and the Security Council for its lack of cooperation with international powers to reveal the exact extent of its nuclear capability. Many in India exhorted Iran to improve upon the "credibility problem" that its years of "clandestine proliferation efforts... created for it in Europe and the West", from 2003 to 2015. Both the Indian political class and security establishment

pitched for a diplomatic solution to Iran's nuclear crisis within the framework of the non-proliferation regime, even though New Delhi has always endorsed Iran's right to a peaceful nuclear programme within the NPT regime. It bears recalling that India's former external affairs minister, Natwar Singh, visited Tehran in September 2005 and was reported to have pledged support for Iran's peaceful nuclear energy programme.

While the US is consistent in its position that Iran must not be allowed to have nuclear weapons, it was Trump who pulled out of the Iranian nuclear deal in his first term. His positions are ambivalent; as far back as 2016, he held the view that the US should consider allowing Japan and South Korea to develop nuclear weapons, as this would enable Japan to deter China and South Korea to deter its northern counterpart, without the US spending a single cent.

The Obama administration decided against air strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities or launching a full-scale military attack, apprehensive that such action might trigger a war between Israel and Iran that would involve the US. It concluded that an American attack might cement solidarity among millions of Arabs, Sunnis and Shiites, causing them to side with Iran, rekindle the terrorist jihad, destroy the Israel-Palestine peace process (and whatever remnants are left of it), and end America's attempt to restore its global leadership role. The most telling assumption was that they would probably not stop Iran from developing nuclear weapons anyway.

The nuclear cover

Modi could tell Trump that he was as opposed to nuclear proliferation as much as nuclear apartheid, or that if attacking Iran to denuclearise it was legitimate, other nations with rogue credentials previously active in clandestine nuclear proliferation could also be made a fair target.

The trouble with nuclear weapons is that one wants to have them for the exact reason others want to prevent them. In 1963, the Kennedy administration was secretly fighting Israel's nuclear weapons development programme, contrary to what the Trump administration is doing. Trump has previously defended the strikes on Iran, likening them to decisive actions taken in World War II.

"I don't want to use an example of Hiroshima or Nagasaki... but that was essentially the same thing. That ended that war. This ended the war," he said, completely impervious to the deeper ramifications of his own statement pointing to why nations fight tooth and nail to put an end to nuclear apartheid and explaining why at various times in recent decades, four potential regional challengers to US interests in the region have sought nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles: Iraq, Iran, Libya, and Syria.

Now that the war is raging in full fury, the search must be on to find a middle ground between the neoconservatives for whom reality means a war against "Islamo-fascism," and the anti-Zionists who see Israel at the root of all evil in West Asia. The death of diplomacy is no less scary than the death of civilians.

(The writer is a Kolkata-based commentator on geopolitics, development and culture)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

The myth of male courage

In the narrowest spaces of life, it is often women who move first and men who follow

PRIYAN R NAIK

On a visit to Gokarna, I found myself in unlikely company; an infantry colonel with decades of field service behind him, another companion who had retired after a long banking career and Praveena, the colonel's homemaker wife. Together we were to visit an ancient natural underground void, a slightly intimidating Gogarbha Cave, formed from a rock around 150 million years old. Hindu mythology claimed, Lord Shiva emerged from the ear of a cow in this cave and therefore the name Gogarbha.

The approach to the cave was deceptively serene. Coconut palms tilted lazily against the sky while shrubs and wild grass grew in the unlikeliest of places. Nothing had prepared us for the cave's entrance: a narrow, low slit in the rock that demanded physical concessions. We had to bend low, almost bow, before entering.

All three men were past seventy. Age speaks at such moments though between us lay years of uniforms, offices, files and authority. The colonel examined the opening with practised assessment. Years in the infantry had trained him to read terrain, anticipate hazard, calculate movement. The cave offered little visibility, uneven footing and the unmistakable message of being claustrophobic inside.

I hesitated myself, but dressed the hesitation in intellectual curiosity. It is one thing to admire ascetics looking for '*moksha*' in darkness; quite another to negotiate darkness with joints that no longer trust sudden movement. The retired banker, seasoned by decades of weighing risk against return, regarded the aperture with similar sobriety. Prudence is a habit that does not retire easily.

Praveena, stood quietly beside us. For decades she had followed the unpredictable rhythms of army life, packing up homes at short notice, managing long absences, raising kids across unfamiliar towns. Her courage had never required an audience. The cave did not appear to her as an obstacle but as an adventure. Without fuss, she slipped off her sandals and moved forward. No proclamation, no challenge, just a decision. In that small act was a lifetime of unadvertised strength.

We remained outside.

The colonel, who had once led men through far harsher uncertainties, adopted an air of dignified watchfulness. The banker studied the rocks as though assessing accounting stability. I found myself absorbed in the play of grass and shadow, as if research would compensate for not entering the cave.

When Praveena emerged, there was no triumph in her expression, only composure. Inside she said, the air was cool and skylight emerged through an opening in the roof. There were three meditating foreigners, all silent and in immobile postures. One of them offered her a lamp to study the walls and the low ceiling.

As we left for our car park, the colonel resumed command of the open path, the banker returned to his calculations, me the writer to metaphor. But the cave had delivered an unmistakable verdict. In the narrowest spaces of life, it is often women who move first and men who follow.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

State govt must act fast, start recruitment process

The article 'Hiring challenge as 86k govt employees to retire by 2030' (Mar 17), points to lack of manpower planning by the state government. The recruitment process needs to be a continuous one and not allow huge backlog. Any attempt to clear this backlog by mass recruitment drive at a later date means otherwise eligible candidates would become ineligible due to age factor. Another factor affecting timely recruitment is the reservation policy, which appears to be an eternal problem. Further, quoting financial burden for not filling up vacancies defies logic as these posts are meant for providing public service. The government must revisit the issue and start the recruitment process soon.

H V K Bhatta, Bengaluru

Bar criminals from ballot

The ADR report on West Bengal's legislators is a grim reminder of the criminalisation of politics. With 47% of MLAs facing criminal cases and 37% accused of serious offenses like murder and rape, India's democracy is being held hostage by muscle and money power. The judiciary must move beyond mere disclosure mandates. It is time for the Supreme Court to direct a permanent ban on candidates with framed charges for heinous crimes, rather than waiting for convictions that take decades. To safeguard the 2026 elections across four states and a UT, we need fast-track courts for lawmakers and a legal mechanism to de-recognise parties that repeatedly field history-sheeters. Justice must precede the vote.

Vijaykumar H K, Bengaluru

Content is still the king

Apropos 'Pan-India dreams and Kannada cinema realities' (Mar 15), the analysis reveals a rather dismal picture of Kannada cinema, where few films succeed at the box office. There was a time when parallel cinema ruled the roost, with directors like Puttanna Kanagal, Girish Kasaravalli, and P Seshadri producing works often based on best-selling novels. Audience tastes changed, and action-oriented films with wafer-thin storylines became popular. The pan-India craze led producers to make big-budget films for a wider audience. The advent of VFX and AI has the potential to transform cinema, but a good storyline, screenplay, and direction are essential for success.

C V Aravind, Bengaluru

Our readers are welcome to email letters to: **letters@deccanherald.co.in** (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

We have transformed from 'politics of vote-bank' to 'politics of performance'.

Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister

Perhaps the less we have, the more we are required to brag.

John Steinbeck

TO BE PRECISE

IN PERSPECTIVE

A stress test for Karnataka's finances

The Fiscal Health Index underlines strain from debt concerns and a rise in welfare and committed expenditure

ANANTHA RAMU M R

The NITI Aayog's Fiscal Health Index serves as a framework to assess and compare the fiscal performance of Indian states. Conceived primarily to evaluate the fiscal soundness of the states, the Index also guides reforms and encourages evidence-based policymaking.

Major sub-indices considered are the quality of expenditure, revenue mobilisation, fiscal prudence, debt index, and debt sustainability. The indices are constructed separately for major states, north-eastern states, and Himalayan states. States are ranked and categorised as aspirants, performers, frontrunners, and achievers.

The Index for 2023-24, released recently, places Karnataka in 9th place among 18 major states, with a score of 41.7 out of 100. It is classified under the category of frontrunners. Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Telangana are the other states in this category. Odisha was ranked 1st in the Index, with a score of 73.1. It held the top spot in the previous year (2022-23) as well. Among the major states, Punjab, with a score of 12.4, is at the bottom of the list. Joining Punjab in the aspirant category, among the major states, are Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, and West Bengal.

Karnataka's rank has improved from 10th in 2022-23. However, this position could be seen as surprising, considering its stature as a fiscally disciplined state. Karnataka was the first state to enact and implement a fiscal responsibility act of its own in 2002, even before the Union government enacted its Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act in 2003. The fiscal responsibility legislation for the states mandates the states to keep their fiscal deficit below 3% of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), to eliminate revenue deficit, and to maintain their public debt below 25% of the GSDP.

Fiscal deficit is the difference between total expenditure and total revenue, while revenue deficit denotes the difference between revenue expenditure and revenue receipts. Laws governing the fiscal policies of states affirm the golden rule of public finance – borrowings shall be spent on the formation of capital.

Karnataka has been a frontrunner in adhering to the fiscal consolidation roadmap since 2005-06. The state has reported a surplus in the revenue account for many years after it enacted the fiscal responsibility act, until the Covid-19 outbreak in 2019-20.

So what, really, is pushing down Karnataka's rank in the Fiscal Health Index? Of the sub-indices the NITI Aayog considered, public debt sustainability is a parameter that has dragged down the state's scores. Debt sustainability evaluates a state's long-term ability to service debt without creating fiscal stress. The indicator the NITI Aayog used to measure debt sustainability is the difference between the growth rate of GSDP and the growth rate of interest payments. If the growth rate of the economy is higher than the growth rate of the interest payments, the debt is seen as sustainable.

Funding the guarantees

Another crucial metric is fiscal prudence, which is measured by the fiscal deficit-GSDP ratio and the revenue deficit-GSDP ratio. States with lower ratios are considered fiscally prudent. The NITI Aayog reports that though Karnataka has shown gradual consolidation by successfully reducing the deficit post-pandemic, it has also been constrained by the rising welfare and committed expenditure. Added to this, a decline in the share of resources to the state, as per the recommendation of the 15th Finance Commission, when compared with the previous Finance Commission allocations, has also hindered efforts towards fiscal prudence.

Given recent trends of increased government expenditure owing to the guarantee programmes, the decline in Finance Commission transfers, reduction in GST revenue, etc., the state's Fiscal Health Index may show a downward trend for 2024-25 and 2025-26. However, there is a positive takeaway from the marginally higher devolution from 2026-27, as per the 16th Finance Commission recommendations.

The state government's efforts to improve mobilisation of excise duty through structural reforms, such as the introduction of Alcohol-in-Beverage (AIB)-based taxation from April 2026, may prove crucial on the road to improved fiscal health. In addition, as presented in the State Budget 2026-27, Karnataka is set to pursue what it calls the '11G Economic Model', which envisions a balance between public expenditure on welfare programmes and the formation of capital. This model balances allocations between social and economic sectors.

Karnataka cannot afford to compromise its overall fiscal health. Given the pressure from rising expenditure, the state must mobilise concerted efforts to optimise its revenue potential.

(The writer is an assistant professor in the School of Social Sciences, MS Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences)

At WTO, India can use strategic trade-off to break the PSH deadlock

ANWAR HUSSAIN SHAIK

India's long-standing priority at the World Trade Organisation has been securing a permanent solution to the public stockholding (PSH)—a policy that allows governments to procure and stockpile food grains for food security and price support without breaching WTO subsidy limits. This demand remains vital for protecting procurement programmes that sustain hundreds of millions of poor farmers and consumers. Yet developed members have shown little urgency on this issue. The current focus of most members is instead on integrating the Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) Agreement into the WTO framework.

As the 14th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC14) in Yaoundé (March 26-29) approaches, pressure is expected to intensify—especially if South Africa softens its stance—potentially isolating India.

Rather than resisting alone, India could reshape the negotiating dynamic through a strategic trade-off: remove its objection to incorporating the IFD Agreement in exchange for a permanent PSH solution. This approach is not unprecedented. At the 2013 Bali Ministerial and its follow-up General Council meeting in Geneva in 2014, India secured the first "peace clause" on food security by allowing consensus on the Trade Facilitation Agreement. A similar bargain at MC14 could convert mounting pressure into negotiating leverage, aligning India's food security imperative with the investment priorities of developed members.

To appreciate this interplay, let us understand how negotiations and decisions take place in the WTO and what has set 'investment' apart from other discussions.

Although trade and investment both drive economic development, they are regulated differently. Trade is governed by WTO and free trade agreement commitments, while investment is handled through domestic laws and international investment agreements outside the WTO. Unlike traded goods, investments maintain ongoing ties to their origin, and entering into an investment treaty affects policy space and sovereignty in host countries.

In the WTO, decisions are taken by consensus at Ministerial Conferences and the General Council. New multilateral agreements become Annex 1 documents. Plurilateral agreements listed in Annex 4 bind only participating members and create no obligations for non-participating members. Adding agreements to either annex requires the consensus of the entire membership.

Investment debates at the WTO began at the 1996 Singapore Ministerial, where "trade and investment" was introduced. India and other developing countries opposed it, citing sovereignty concerns. In July 2004, members agreed to negotiate trade facilitation but explicitly ruled out investment talks, creating a clear negative mandate.

However, in 2017, some members tried to bring investment back, but India blocked it. Subsequently, these members discussed it outside the WTO's formal negotiating mandate and proposed the finalised IFD Agreement for incorporation as an Annex 4 document at MC13 in 2024 in Abu Dhabi. India and South Africa blocked this proposal, arguing that the IFD initiative reintroduces investment through a "procedural backdoor".

Proponents argue that the IFD text excludes contentious commitments of market access and investor-State dispute settlement (ISDS) and extends MFN to non-participants as well. Critics, however, contend that commitments to administrative processes can render market access. The so-called firewall to keep out ISDS disputes is a one-way valve. Investors can always invoke ISDS under their respective IIAs using the Fair and Equitable Treatment (FET) clause.

The MFN treatment, though extended to non-participants in Article 5, is negated by the footnote. Finally, the IFD Agreement can be amended by a two-third majority, meaning all contentious issues kept outside can be brought back later.

Facilitation improves the flow of foreign direct investment. However, the need for an international treaty is suspect. Unlike trade agreements, in which exporting countries seek assurances of market access through treaties, in the investment space, it is in the interests of FDI-seeking countries to facilitate, for which there is no need for an international treaty commitment.

Legal and systemic implications: The proponents are seeking to incorporate IFD into the WTO under Article X:9 of the Marrakesh Agreement. Article X:9 provides for the addition of a trade agreement to Annex 4, which should be by consensus. IFD, however, is not a trade agreement. Additionally, IFD is not a treaty under the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (VCLT).

Systemically, IFD raises concerns about the erosion of the WTO's multilateral mandate, which operates on a consensus-based decision-making model—introducing IFD through such plurilateral initiatives risks eroding this foundation, particularly given the WTO's prior negative stance on investment. It will also set a precedent, which is illegal. Further, it will reinforce asymmetrical bargaining power at the WTO between powerful and smaller developing and LDC members.

Strategic implications for India: Geopolitically, the IFD is dominated by China, with 99 of the 128 IFD participants also being members of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). IFD is a strategic tool for China to secure its global investment footprint and "String of Pearls" strategy under a multilateral shield of the WTO.

Notwithstanding the implications, India can avoid potential isolation by allowing consensus on the incorporation of the IFD Agreement in exchange for a permanent solution to the Public Stock Programmes of developing countries for their food security.

(The writer is a former chairman of the Technical Barriers to Trade Committee of the WTO and was a director in the Department of Economic Affairs)

Even though women contribute to a household's income, their labour, both paid and unpaid, and their individuality are constantly devalued. For equitable development, the definition of progress should consider their empowerment

Unpaid, unseen, unending: The workdays of rural women

DIVYASHREE K

A woman manually harvesting rice with a sickle. Women work almost continuously, with no clear breaks; only transitions between different kinds of paid and unpaid labour. NANDITHA GOGATE

In Devadurga, a taluk in Raichur district, Karnataka, the sun rises slowly over fields. The dusty main road near the bus stand fills gradually with bikes and tractors, and tea stalls begin to hum with conversations.

Gauri's* day, however, begins long before the rooster crows. At around 4.30 am, when it is still dark outside, she moves quietly across the mud floor, taking care not to disturb the others. In a small kitchen beside the storeroom, she lights the stove and begins preparing the food while attending to other household duties. The scraping of utensils and the hiss of the fire mark the first hours of her day.

Once the household is in motion, the next layer of labour begins for Gauri. Tying the end of her sari, she picks up her bag and walks toward the fields beyond the canal embankment for the day's work. While working in the field, when the days stretch under a harsh, oppressive sun, backs bend and fingers move constantly. Still, stopping is not an option. If she doesn't go to the field, the work will continue, but her income will fall.

By evening, she returns from the fields with dust on her feet and aches in her limbs. Nevertheless, the day does not end for her; it merely shifts indoors. Dinner needs to be cooked, water fetched, the elders attended to, and the children fed. Gauri eats last, often in silence, and goes to sleep knowing the same routine will repeat at dawn.

The daily schedule does not look very different for Savitri, who works for the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM). Long before her paid labour begins, her day starts at 5 am with cooking, cleaning, fetching water, and caring for her family's cows. From 1 pm, she works in the fields for three hours. At 4 pm, she returns home to perform additional household chores, after which she steps out for survey work linked to NRLM. She returns home at 7 pm to cook for the family, eating only after 9 pm.

Lakshmi works as a driver for the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) vehicle, collecting solid waste from the villages. However, much like Gauri and Savitri, her day too begins much earlier, at least three hours before her official duty starts at 7 am. After her work as the SBM driver, she starts her second job at a nursery, caring for plants. At 6 pm, she returns home to cook dinner and do other household activities. She uses a brief window between cooking and eating to get some rest and catch up on her favourite television serials.

Shanta and Kamala, who work as a teacher and a tailor, respectively, have similar work schedules. All these women work almost continuously, with no clear breaks; only transitions between different kinds of paid and unpaid labour.

Different occupations, one shared reality

To an outsider, the lives of these women might appear different; after all, what commonality can an NRLM worker, a driver, a teacher, a tailor, and a daily labourer possibly have? However, this dissimilarity is only superficial. The daily schedules of these women follow an almost identical pattern: paid work is invariably bookended by unpaid domestic labour that begins before sunrise and extends well after sunset.

The routine of these women is not an outlier; it is a reality that many women face, not only in Devadurga but across many rural areas, where their domestic labour remains unpaid, unnamed, and largely invisible. Cooking, cleaning, and caring are often viewed as a woman's duty, rather than as something valuable in its own right. Across India, time-use surveys reveal how deeply gendered this pattern is. According to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (2020), women spend an average of 289 minutes per day on unpaid domestic work, compared to 88 minutes spent by men.

The privilege of rest

When people speak of 'work', they usually refer to labour that is both public and paid; and most often, men's. Men's labour is tied to fieldwork, market activity, or seasonal agricultural cycles. Furthermore, it is believed they exert significant effort in the form of physical labour, and confront economic uncertainty and seasonal risks.

By contrast, even though women also work for long hours, and their contribution adds to the family's income, they have neither ownership over it, nor control over its allocation. It is men who discuss purchases, savings, household expenditures, and farm-related investments.

This devaluation of women's labour, both paid and unpaid, impacts how society treats their time, mobility, and right to rest. Men wake later in the morning and begin their day only when agricultural or wage-based work is scheduled. When those tasks are completed, or when there is no immediate work available, men commonly spend time in public spaces, sitting at tea stalls, resting near roadside platforms, discussing politics or farming, or playing informal games. Rest, for them, is considered a natural pause after an effort; something earned, not questioned.

For women, contrastingly, the work is continuous and rarely time-bound. Domestic responsibilities, caregiving, and agricultural labour overlap considerably, existing in a cycle with no identifiable breaks. This imbalance becomes even more pronounced during peak agricultural seasons, when women, after working long hours under intense sunlight in the fields and carrying loads, return home to continue household labour.

Even when women are physically worn out, rest is not readily available. For them, sitting outside, socialising, or pausing in public spaces is often viewed as inappropriate or indulgent. A resting woman may be judged as careless, lazy, or neglectful of her responsibilities.

This privilege of rest reveals something deeper: the inequality is not about how much work is done, but about who is doing the work. It reflects a deeper hierarchy of whose time is more valuable; whose exhaustion is acknowledged; and whose body is allowed relief.

Even as conversations around development intensify, and even as we embark on programmes on water security, climate resilience, and agricultural prosperity, there are some crucial questions that should be considered when defining 'progress': is the burden of invisible labour being reduced? Are the efforts of Gauri, Savitri, Lakshmi, Shanta, and Kamala being recognised? Are they being empowered in any manner? The pathways of development we imagine for Raichur must integrate these perspectives. Ignoring these would result in resilience and development being founded on skewed or flawed ideas.

**Gauri is an amalgamation of multiple women the writer interacted with and observed. The names have been changed to protect identities.*

(The writer is a research associate at WELL Labs, a water systems transformation centre based in Bengaluru)

What should students learn in the age of AI?

UPASHA KUMARI

For centuries, education systems were built on a simple assumption: knowledge was scarce. Teachers, textbooks, and libraries were the primary gateways to information. Classrooms, therefore, focused on transmitting knowledge, often through memorisation, repetition, and standardised testing.

Artificial intelligence is quietly dismantling that model.

Today, a student can generate an essay, summarise complex readings, solve mathematical problems, or receive explanations on nearly any topic within seconds. The central question confronting educators is no longer whether students have access to information. They do, more abundantly than any generation before them. The deeper question is what it now means to be educated in a world where information is instantly available.

The distinction between information and understanding has become central to the purpose of schooling. Many traditional assignments—structured essays, textbook summaries, and formulaic answers—are precisely the tasks AI systems can now perform with ease. Attempting to ban these technologies is unlikely to succeed. Technology has always reshaped learning environments, and AI will be no different.

Instead, AI exposes a deeper issue: much of schooling still rewards the reproduction of information rather than the cultivation of thought.

This moment calls for a rethinking of learning itself. If machines can generate answers, schools must focus on forms of thinking that cannot be automated. Dialogue, interpretation, imagination, and judgment become central. Oral examinations, debates, collaborative inquiry, and project-based learning may become far more meaningful indicators of understanding than standardised essays.

Teachers are already encountering this shift. A student who once struggled to structure an essay can now generate one in seconds. The challenge is no longer detecting AI use, but designing tasks where thinking cannot be outsourced. Asking students to defend arguments, reflect on personal experiences, or interpret contemporary events through theoretical frameworks demands engagement that automated systems cannot fully replicate.

Paradoxically, AI may compel education systems to rediscover creativity and critical pedagogy.

In *Creativity and Critical Pedagogy in Education*, co-authored with Professor Arpan Yagnik of Pennsylvania State University, we argue that creativity in education cannot be reduced to individual originality or isolated innovation. It must be understood within broader social, cultural, and political contexts. Classrooms should not simply produce efficient problem-solvers but also thoughtful individuals capable of questioning dominant narratives and imagining alternatives. AI makes this argument more urgent.

If machines can generate content, synthesise information, and replicate patterns of knowledge production, the uniquely human dimension of learning lies in the ability to interpret, critique, and reimagine the world. Creativity, in this sense, is not merely about producing new ideas but about cultivating the intellectual courage to challenge established frameworks.

This is also where the humanities regain relevance. Disciplines such as philosophy, history, literature, and political theory train students to grapple with ambiguity, ethical dilemmas, and competing perspectives—questions that no algorithm can answer conclusively.

In India, where schooling remains exam-centric and driven by memorisation, AI exposes the limitations of a system organised around information recall. When machines can reproduce information instantly, memorisation alone loses much of its value.

As policymakers debate the integration of AI into education, the conversation cannot remain limited to digital infrastructure. The deeper question is pedagogical. How should curricula, teacher training, and assessment evolve in a world where information is abundant but judgment remains scarce? The challenge before educators is not merely technological but philosophical. What kinds of thinkers should schools cultivate—individuals who can retrieve answers or citizens capable of exercising judgment in a complex world?

If classrooms are to adapt, teachers must be supported in navigating this transition. Teacher training still focuses on curriculum delivery and assessment compliance rather than on inquiry-driven learning. Teachers must guide students in interpreting information, questioning automated outputs, and developing judgment. Preparing educators for this shift will be essential if AI is to strengthen learning rather than merely accelerate information consumption.

(The writer is an education specialist, currently pursuing her PhD at Sharda University)

OUR PAGES OF HISTORY

50 YEARS AGO: MARCH 1976

Bid to ascertain CIA hand in dynamites case

New Delhi, March 17
Home Minister K. Brahmananda Reddy told the Rajya Sabha today that the question whether the United States' Central Intelligence Agency had a hand in the case pertaining to the discovery of dynamites in Baroda on the midnight of March 8-9 would also be looked into- during the investigation. He said the CBI was assisting the local authorities in the investigation. However, he did not rule out the possibility of the CBI itself taking over the investigation at a later stage if necessary.

25 YEARS AGO: MARCH 2001

Cong veers round to coalition idea

Bangalore, March 17
Shifting its stand on the issue of coalition as decided at the Pachmarhi session in 1998, the Congress today announced its readiness to enter into a coalition arrangement with secular parties as part of an electoral alliance in the wake of the present political scenario at the Centre. The Congress, in its draft 31- page political resolution, made it clear that it was ready for appropriate electoral or coalition arrangements with secular parties. However, the party said it was not ready to compromise its basic ideology.

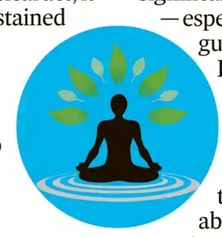
OASIS | MOHAMMED TALHA SIDDI BAPA

Ramadan: A time for self-audit, shared humanity

Just before dawn, across continents and time zones, kitchen lights flicker on. In quiet homes, a simple meal is shared and a final sip of water is taken. With sunrise, millions begin a fast that lasts until sunset.

To an outside observer, Ramadan may appear to be about abstaining from food and drink. For Muslims, however, it is something deeper: an annual exercise in self-examination, discipline and moral recalibration — a month that invites believers to pause, reflect and reset. In a world shaped by speed, consumption and constant stimulation, Ramadan proposes restraint.

Modern life rarely encourages self-audit. Success is measured outwardly — by income, visibility and productivity. Ramadan reverses that direction, turning attention inward. Fasting is not simply a physical act; it is a voluntary discipline sustained by personal conviction. No authority monitors it, no state enforces it.



The fast quietly asks difficult questions: How do we speak when irritated? How do we respond to anger? Do we exaggerate, gossip or exploit? In that sense, Ramadan functions like a yearly review of character. Hunger and thirst slow impulse and make appetite visible. And in making appetite visible, they make choice visible.

If fasting is the practice of Ramadan, the *Qur'an* forms its ethical framework. Beyond its theological significance, the *Qur'an* is approached — especially during Ramadan — as a guide to personal development. Its recurring themes are not abstract metaphysics alone. They speak of honesty in trade, fairness in judgment, restraint in anger, care for the vulnerable and accountability before a higher moral authority.

Many Muslims read the *Qur'an* more attentively during this month, not merely for recitation but for reflection: What kind of person am I becoming? Where have I been unjust? Whom have I neglected? These questions extend beyond religious identity. They belong to the universal vocabulary of ethical growth. Fasting also has a psychological dimension. Hunger softens certainty and reminds one of vulnerability. Though the fast is temporary, the experience often deepens empathy for those who live with deprivation year-round.

As a result, Ramadan is marked by increased acts of charity and generosity — from organised giving to quiet acts of helping others. For those who observe it, Ramadan is a celebration of revelation and an opportunity for inner renewal. For those who do not, it still poses a question: what governs our lives — impulse or conscience?

Ramping up LPG production to ensure supplies: Sitharaman

NEW DELHI, PTI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said the domestic production of LPG is being ramped up to ensure cooking gas supplies to households, as imports have been disrupted following the closure of the Strait of Hormuz due to the ongoing war in West Asia.

Nirmala Sitharaman

India has sufficient availability of fertilisers for the upcoming Kharif season and will soon begin bidding to import crop nutrients for the winter Rabi crop, the minister stated.

Replying to a debate on the second batch of supplementary demands for grants in the Rajya Sabha, Sitharaman also informed that the government would be clearing oil bonds worth Rs 1.48 lakh crore issued during the UPA government to oil marketing companies in lieu of cash subsidies on petroleum products. The bonds carried interest rates between 7 and 8.4%.

On LPG shortages, she said India imports nearly 65% of its requirements. "Overwhelmingly, 90% of the 65% LPG imports come from the Strait of Hormuz. As a result, there was speculation about whether we would get it or not," she said.

"There are enough reports on how we are ensuring a steady flow during these turbulent times."

Assam Congress MP Pradyut Bordoloi resigns ahead of polls

GUWAHATI, PTI: In a jolt to the Opposition Congress, Assam's Lok Sabha MP Pradyut Bordoloi on Tuesday resigned from the party, barely 20 days ahead of Assembly elections.

Pradyut Bordoloi

Bordoloi has sent his resignation letter to party chief Mallikarjun Kharge.

A former state cabinet minister and two-time MP from Nagaon constituency, Bordoloi's son Prateek is a Congress candidate from Margherita seat for the state polls due on April 9.

In the one-line resignation letter addressed to Kharge, the MP said, "With an overwhelming sense of sadness today, I hereby tender my resignation from all posts, privileges and the primary membership of the Indian National Congress."

Bora said state party chief Gaurav Gogoi and AICC general secretary in-charge of Assam Jitendra Singh are meeting with Bordoloi over the issue in New Delhi.

Centre asks states to expedite approvals for piped gas projects

Second LPG tanker Nanda Devi arrives at Gujarat port

AJITH ATHRADY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Centre has asked states to expedite approvals for piped gas projects to enable faster rollout and ease pressure on cooking gas availability.

"Situation remains a matter of concern, but we are providing supplies as before to the domestic consumers," Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, told reporters here.

This was made possible as refineries were asked to ramp up domestic output, which was then prioritised for household kitchens. Commercial use of LPG, such as in hotels and restaurants, was initially curtailed, but later restored to a fifth of their normal offtake.

"We have to look at alternatives," she added.

Meanwhile, the second Indian-flagged LPG tanker Nanda Devi reached Kandla Port in Gujarat on early Tuesday after safely sailing from the war-hit Strait of Hormuz, and efforts are on to ensure the safe passage of the remaining 22 Indian vessels still stranded in the conflict zone.

The government is promoting commercial and household LPG users to switch to piped natural gas. City gas companies are offering incentives and faster connections, Sharma said.

A child sits over an empty LPG cooking gas cylinder, as people arrive to avail refilled ones, in Prayagraj, on Tuesday. PTI

On Monday, the Union government wrote to all state governments to expedite approvals for city gas projects. It asked them to issue deemed permission for pending applications for large city gas pipelines, approvals for new city gas projects within 24 hours, waive road restoration charges, and relax working schedules.

Sharma said panic bookings for a refill LPG cylinder peaked to 87.7 lakh on March 13, but have since eased, with about 70 lakh bookings on Monday. This compares to about 55 lakh bookings in pre-war days.

LPG deliveries have kept pace. "We delivered 62.5 lakh cylinders on March 13, 60 lakh on March 14... this compares to 50 lakh deliveries in pre-conflict times", she said.

The two ships are carrying about 92,712 tonnes of LPG, equivalent to a day's requirement of cooking gas in the country, Rajesh Kumar Sinha, Special Secretary in the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, told journalists here.

PM Modi speaks to UAE President

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday spoke to UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, discussed with him the current situation in West Asia and agreed on ensuring safe and free navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.

During his telephonic conversation, Modi strongly condemned all attacks on the Gulf country and agreed with the UAE leader to continue to work together for the early restoration of peace, security and stability in West Asia.

Steps taken to deal with LPG crisis: Centre to HC

NAGPUR, PTI

The Union government on Tuesday assured the Bombay High Court that it is making all attempts on domestic and international fronts to address the hardship caused by the LPG shortage amid the ongoing conflict in West Asia.

The Nagpur bench of the court accepted the Centre's submission and disposed of the petition filed by LPG distributors, noting that it is taking "all the necessary steps in the matter to protect the interests of individuals".

The court on March 12 issued notices to the Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry and a private firm in connection with a petition filed by six LPG distributors seeking an increased supply of domestic cooking gas cylinders amid the energy crisis caused by the Iran war.

The petitioners claimed that the Nagpur-headquartered Confidence Petroleum India Ltd had failed to increase the supply of household LPG cylinders despite the Centre's directive prioritising domestic distribution.

The petition, filed through advocates Shyam Dewani and Sahil Dewani, claimed that the war had disrupted global crude supply, leading to constraints in LPG production. Following this, the ministry had directed that LPG production and supply to domestic consumers be given priority.

Advocate Dewani said that the Centre submitted an affidavit in the HC.

Solicitor General of India Tushar Mehta, appearing via video-conference, informed the court that it was making all attempts on domestic and international levels to address the hardship caused by the shortage of LPG.

Steps are being taken to ensure that the international crisis does not affect India, he said.

Urging the court to dispose of the petition by LPG dealers who claimed that exports were being prioritised over domestic supply, Mehta said negotiations are being held at the diplomatic level.

"The court can consider closing this (petition) trusting the government. Individual issues can be taken up by the state government," he said.

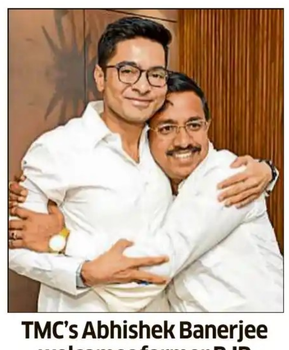
The Centre, in its affidavit, submitted that it is fully cognisant of issues related to the supply of LPG.

"The Union of India is making all possible attempts domestically and internationally to ensure that no hardship is caused to anyone and distribution, availability remain smooth," the affidavit stated.

TMC fields ex-aide against Suvendu in Nandigram

Announces candidates for 291 of 294 seats

ANIRBAN BHAUMIK
KOLKATA, DHNS


TMC's Abhishek Banerjee welcomes former BJP leader Pabitra Kar. PTI

The Trinamool Congress on Tuesday poached Pabitra Kar, a close aide of BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari, and fielded him as its candidate in the Nandigram Assembly constituency against Adhikari.

The move comes a day after the BJP announced Adhikari's candidature from Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's Bhabanipur seat, in addition to his home turf Nandigram.

Pabitra Kar, a BJP leader from Purba Medinipur district, met TMC general secretary Abhishek Banerjee and joined the ruling party. Hours later, Abhishek and Mamata announced that Kar would contest against Adhikari in Nandigram.

The TMC announced the party's candidates for 291 of the 294 Assembly constituencies in West Bengal. The remaining three seats in the Darjeeling Hills were left for ally Bharatiya Gorkha Prajatantrik Morcha to contest.

To blunt local dissatisfaction, the TMC — in power since 2011 — dropped 74 of its 224 sitting legislators from the list, renominated 135, and shifted 15 to different constituencies.

"We will win more than 226 seats," Mamata said, as she accused the EC of playing "a nice game" to ensure an advantage for the BJP in the elections. She slammed the EC for arbitrarily changing bureaucrats at the higher echelons of the state government, as well as reshuffling the top brass of the state police, soon after announcing the poll schedule on Sunday.

Pabitra Kar had long owed his political allegiance to Adhikari. He left the TMC and joined the BJP a few weeks before Adhikari did so in December 2020. Kar then played a key role in Adhikari's narrow victory over Mamata in Nandigram in 2021.

Kar said he had decided to return to the TMC, citing disillusionment with the BJP and its "anti-people policies" in West Bengal and beyond.

"I will still win from Bhabanipur because I work for people round the clock, 365 days a year," Mamata said.

RS polls: Congress, BJP win one seat each in Haryana

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

RAJYA SABHA TRIUMPH

Seats: **37**
Elected unopposed: **26**
BJP: 12
Cong: 6
TMC: 4
DMK: 3
JD(U): 2
BJD, Shiv Sena, RPI(A), NCP, NCP(SP), AIADMK, PMK, UPPL, RLM, Independent: **One each**

Prominent Winners

Nitish Kumar (JD-U)

Nitin Nabin (BJP)

Sharad Pawar (NCP-SP)

Abhishek Singhvi (Congress), **Tiruchi Siva** (DMK), **Babul Supriyo** (Trinamool Congress), **Ramdas Athawale** (RPI-A), **M Thambidurai** (AIADMK), **Upendra Kushwaha** (RLM)

Congress staved off a challenge from a BJP-backed independent to wrest a seat in Rajya Sabha elections in Haryana with its candidate Karamvir Singh Boudh winning in a keenly fought poll that also saw the ruling BJP's Sanjay Bhatia registering a victory.

Boudh could manage only 28 first preference votes, three less than the required number for victory, despite the Congress having 37 MLAs. While five of them cross-voted, the votes of four Congress MLAs were declared invalid, besides one BJP lawmaker.

His victory was hanging in the balance despite Congress having enough MLAs in its support, as the entry of Satish Nandal, a BJP state vice president, as an independent candidate had queered the pitch in which BJP official candidate Bhatia's victory was certain.

Nandal was supported by the BJP in the hope that cross-voting from the 37-member Congress would help it to deal a blow to the latter. A winning candidate needed 31 first preference votes, and the BJP has 48 MLAs, besides the support of three independents. Two INLD MLAs abstained from voting.

With second preference votes of BJP going to Nandal, he closed the gap but could not go past Boudh's 28. At the end, the invalid vote of a BJP MLA appeared to have tilted the balance in favour of Boudh, whose surprise candidature had upset some Congress leaders.

The Haryana result also comes as a relief for the Opposition as the NDA had managed to win extra seats in Bihar and Odisha, where Congress, RJD and BJD MLAs either cross-voted or remained absent from voting.

3 MLAs suspended

Congress on Tuesday suspended three MLAs in Odisha from the party after they cross-voted in favour of a BJP-backed candidate during the Rajya Sabha elections, leading to the defeat of the Opposition common candidate, saying those "betrayed" the party are "betraying the nation".

It also warned that action is on the way against five MLAs in Haryana, who backed the BJP-backed candidates during the polls, though the Congress managed to scrape through in the polls.

Action may also follow against the three Bihar party MLAs, who remained absent for voting, which led to the defeat of the RJD candidate in the polls.

Una Dalit flogging case: 5 sent to 5 years in jail; 35 acquitted

SATISH JHA
AHMEDABAD, DHNS

A special court on Tuesday sentenced five individuals to five years in prison and imposed a fine of Rs 5,000 each in the Una Dalit flogging case, a day after finding them guilty even as it acquitted 35 other suspects.

All five convicted individuals, who are currently out on bail, have already spent over five years in jail, meaning they may not have to serve the sentence.

The court of additional sessions judge Jignesh Pandya pronounced the quantum of sentence after finding them guilty under the charges of voluntarily causing hurt using dangerous weapons (IPC 324), wrongful confinement (IPC 342) and intentional insult with intent to provoke a breach of the peace (IPC 504) and charges under section of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes (prevention) act.

Those who have been sentenced are Ramesh Jadav, Rakesh Joshi, Pramod Giri Goswami, Nagji Daya, and Balwant Goswami.

The court didn't find evidence to prosecute them under charges of attempt to murder, unlawful assembly and conspiracy, the stringent sections which have provision of life sentence.

The court found that the prosecution failed to prove the charges with sufficient evidence. The order states that nothing came on record to show that the cow was actually killed by the lioness, as there was no detail of any compensation given to the owner of the cow.

Meanwhile, Vasram Sarvaiya told *DH* that they were "sad" with the judgment. He said that "the fight would continue as he will challenge the judgment."

Similarly, Dalit leader and Congress MLA Jignesh Mevani also expressed "shock" over the judgment.

K C Tyagi quits JD(U) after two decades; to decide future course of action soon

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Senior JD(U) leader KC Tyagi on Tuesday quit the Nitish Kumar-led party by "not renewing" his membership and said he will decide on his future course of action soon after consulting his political friends, sympathisers and activists.

KC Tyagi

Tyagi, a former Rajya Sabha MP who was associated with the JD(U) since its inception in October 2003 with the merger of the Samata Party and the erstwhile Janata Dal, will attend a meeting of "like-minded persons" at Delhi's Mavlankar Hall on March 22 to discuss the political situation of the country.

His relationship with the party had deteriorated in recent years after the emergence of Working President Sanjay Jha, leading to his resignation as national spokesperson amid unease in the party leadership over his stand on various issues that triggered trouble with the BJP.

In a statement, Tyagi said, "Now, the membership campaign of the party has ended. This time I've not renewed the membership of the party." He added that his commitment to the "larger and wider ideological points" concerning the interests of the downtrodden and agriculturalists "remains as firm as ever".

Congress demands all-party meet on women's quota rollout

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Amid plans to bring a Bill for early implementation of 33% quota for women in Parliament and Assemblies next week, the government has reached out to the Congress, prompting party chief and Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge to demand an all-party meeting to deliberate on ways for its roll-out at the earliest.

The existing Constitutional provisions allow for the roll-out of women's quota only after a delimitation of constituencies following the Census 2027.

However, the government is planning an amendment to the Constitution (106th Amendment) Act, 2023 or the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam', passed in a special session in September 2023, to delink it from the provisions of delimitation so that it could be implemented as early as in 2027 Assembly polls.

Sources indicated that the Bill to amend the Constitution, which is yet to be cleared by the Union Cabinet, is likely to be introduced in Rajya Sabha as early as Monday. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju wrote to Kharge on Tuesday seeking a meeting with him and senior Congress leaders to discuss modalities and roadmap for implementation of the quota regime.

Rijiju told Kharge that the government reiterates its request for a meeting given the significance of its implementation framework and the broad national consensus required for its effective operationalisation, sources said.

Responding to Rijiju's letter, Kharge recalled that the minister had spoken to him on the issue. He said that he had conveyed the party's view that the government should convene an all-party meeting where a roadmap can be discussed.

While most of the Opposition parties will insist on an OBC sub-quota, they are likely to support the amendments even if they come without their suggestions incorporated.

Congress names 55 candidates for Kerala Assembly elections

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS

FIRST LIST

- Satheesan, Chennithala, Sunny Joseph retain seats
- Most sitting MLAs renominated; 40 names pending
- Alappuzha, Konni seats still undecided
- Actor Ramesh Pisharody fielded in Palakkad
- Nemom candidate yet to be named; BJP chief in fray

The Congress on Tuesday announced its first set of 55 candidates for the Kerala Assembly polls, but suspense remains over some seats where sitting MPs have expressed interest.

Prominent faces like Opposition leader VD Satheesan, his predecessor Ramesh Chennithala and state party chief Sunny Joseph have been allotted their sitting constituencies — Paravur near Kochi, Harippad in Alappuzha, and Peravoor in Kannur, respectively.

Almost all sitting MLAs have been renominated from their constituencies. In the 2021 Assembly elections, the Congress contested 93 seats. Hence, around 40 more candidates are yet to be announced.

The candidate for the Kannur seat, where sitting MP K Sudhakaran is staking a claim, is yet to be announced. Similarly, the candidate for Alappuzha, earlier represented by AICC general secretary KC Venugopal, remains undecided. The candidate for the Konni seat in Pathanamthitta, which Congress MP Adoor Prakash represented for four consecutive terms, is also yet to be announced.

Although the AICC and Kerala PCC leadership had earlier reached a consensus that sitting MPs should stay out of the fray, Kannur MP K Sudhakaran has openly insisted on contesting from Kannur. Poster campaigns backing him have already appeared in the district.

Actor and stand-up comedian Ramesh Pisharody has been allotted the Palakkad seat after sitting MLA Rahul Mamkootathil was expelled from the party following sexual assault charges. Palakkad is one of the seats where the BJP is pinning high hopes of entering the Assembly, fielding firebrand leader Sobha Surendran. The CPM is yet to announce its candidate, though a hotelier from the district is reportedly being considered as a CPM-backed independent.

The candidate for Nemom in Thiruvananthapuram, where BJP state president Rajeev Chandrasekhar is seeking a mandate, has also not been announced.

Former CM K Karunakaran's son K Muraleedharan has been fielded from Vattiyoorkavu in Thiruvananthapuram, where Kerala's first woman IPS officer, R Sreelekha, is seeking a mandate.

Rajinikanth slams Vijay's aide over his 'DMK threat' remark

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

Tamil superstar Rajinikanth may keep an arm's length distance from politics, but his name has now been dragged into the high-stakes April 23 Assembly elections.

Rajnikanth

It all started when Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK) leader Aadhav Arjuna alleged that Rajinikanth was threatened by the DMK to withdraw from politics in 2020, while praising his leader and actor Vijay's "mental strength" to stand up to the Dravidian major.

The off-the-cuff remarks by Aadhav, son-in-law of lottery baron Santiago Martin, were seen as a provocation and aimed at projecting Vijay as someone who doesn't yield to pressure. This set off a flurry of reactions from DMK allies who not merely defended the M K Stalin-led party but also came out in support of the superstar.

Four days later, the Opposition camp — AIADMK and BJP — began bashing Aadhav Arjuna, who has a penchant for stoking controversies, on Monday by accusing him of attempting to gain publicity by targeting a widely respected personality – the timing was interesting as it conveyed more than one message. If one reads between the lines, it can be understood that the condemnation came after the back-channel talks between the BJP and TVK for an alliance didn't yield results.

Breaking his silence, Rajinikanth issued a terse statement, in which he said, "time doesn't speak; but it waits to answer. His remarks are against the truth," Rajinikanth said in the statement, which is also being interpreted as the superstar's way of telling Vijay and his associates that politics was not a child's play and only election results can tell how much film popularity would convert into votes.

Rangaswamy threatens to quit NDA

CHENNAI, DHNS: With just about 20 days to go for the April 9 Assembly polls, the NDA in Puducherry plunged into a crisis on Tuesday with AINRC president and Chief Minister N Rangaswamy refusing to meet BJP election in charge Mansukh Mandaviya for a discussion on alliance.

Rangaswamy has also threatened to quit the NDA if the BJP doesn't agree to his demand to keep the Latchiya Jananayaga Katchi of lottery baron Santiago Martin's son, Jose Charles Martin, out of the alliance. Things came to nought on Monday night after Rangaswamy went into a huddle with his senior colleagues and discussed the possibility of breaking away from the NDA ostensibly to protest against the Centre's silence on granting statehood to Puducherry.

Meanwhile, the Congress-DMK alliance is also struggling to come to an agreement on the number of seats to contest.

Bring law to recognise paternity leave: SC

Says parenthood is a shared responsibility

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said that parenthood is not a solitary function performed by one parent but a shared responsibility in which each parent contributes to the child's holistic development, as it urged the Union government to bring in a provision recognising paternity leave as a social security benefit.

A bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and R Mahadevan said, "A child who is born or adopted does not know what the law has decided about the presence of the father, nor does the child understand how the law values paternity leave."

"The realisation that one of its parents arrived a little late to the story because the law required him to be present at work is something the child may never consciously know," the SC added.

The bench underscored that a provision for paternity leave serves an important purpose by enabling fathers to participate meaningfully in the early stages of a child's life.

"It helps in dismantling gendered roles, encourages fathers to take an active role in child care, fosters a balanced understanding of parenting, and promotes gender equality within family and workplace," the court said.

It also advances the best interests and welfare of the child, which are most effectively served when both parents are enabled to play meaningful and complementary roles in the child's growth, the bench added.

While striking down the provision denying maternity leave for a mother who adopted a child above three months of age, the SC said that a kind of injustice exists, though not deliberate, based on assumptions so deeply rooted that they have ceased to appear as injustice at all, and have come to be accepted as the natural order of society.

"Society has historically attributed caregiving and nurturing responsibilities almost exclusively to mothers. While the role of a mother is undeniably central to a child's emotional, physical and psychological development, it would be incomplete and unjust to overlook the equally significant role of a father."

"The essence of the matter is simple. The presence of both parents during the early development of a child is indispensable. What a father offers to a child in those nascent days cannot be scheduled for a convenient time or compensated for late," it observed.

The bench pointed out that the absence of paternity leave produces two consequences. First, it reinforces gendered roles in parenting. Second, even when a father is willing and eager to contribute, he is left without a meaningful opportunity to do so.

Dads matter too

SC says absence of leave reinforces gendered parenting roles

- Says father's presence vital for child's emotional well-being
- Injustice rooted in assumptions now seen as 'natural order'

A child's early years need both parents for holistic development

India's navigation system in distress with just 3 working satellites

Isro says 18 onboard atomic clocks have stopped functioning

KALYAN RAY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Nearly three years after India's maiden second-generation navigation satellite was placed in orbit, the rest of such satellites are way behind their scheduled launch dates, even as only two of the nine first-generation NAVIC satellites remain functional, crippling the Indian Regional Navigational Satellite System.

The first of the new lot, NVS-01, was placed in orbit in May 2023. The second one, NVS-02, was launched 19 months later in January 2025. The NVS-02 mission, however, failed as the satellite didn't reach the intended orbit.

The third satellite, NVS-03, was planned for a 2025 launch, followed by NVS-04 and NVS-05 in 2026. But none of the launches happened, and no new launch schedules were fixed for the five second-generation navigation satellites to replace the IRNSS satellites, sources said.

Six of the nine older generation IRNSS satellites have stopped providing the navigation services as 18 on-board atomic clocks—three in each satellite—stopped working before their designated lives, sources said.

In a brief message, Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) last week said the on-board atomic clocks of IRNSS-1F stopped functioning on March 13, 10 years after the satellite was launched.

Earlier, all three atomic clocks of IRNSS-1A, 1C, 1D, 1E and 1G turned defunct, making the satellites useless for PNT (position, navigation and timing) services.

This effectively leaves only three navigation satellites—IRNSS-1B, 1I and NVS 01—in orbit, adversely impacting the quality of the service.

Conceived as a regional navigation service for military and civilian applications, the NAVIC (navigation with Indian constellation) system covers the entire Indian region and areas extending up to 1,500 km around the country on dual frequencies in L5 and S bands.

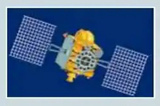
The NVS series of satellites was realised to continue with legacy services while adding new features for wider applications, such as civilian L1 signal and indigenous atomic clock.

DH questions to Isro on the reasons for the failure of imported atomic clocks haven't elicited any response till the time of filing the report.

Isro officials have always not only batted for sovereign satellite constellations to PNT services given the current geopolitical realities, but also favoured expansion of the constellation.

However, research into next-generation clocks needed in navigation satellites, like optical clocks, has made a slow start, as key funding proposals were pending for approvals at the Department of Science and Technology and the Department of Space, sources told *DH*.

Major setback



Six of the nine older generation IRNSS satellites have stopped providing the navigation services as 18 on-board atomic clocks—three in each satellite—stopped working before their designated lives

This effectively leaves only three navigation satellites—IRNSS-1B, 1I and NVS 01—in orbit

Funding proposals for research into next-generation clocks needed in navigation satellites are pending for nod

SC bins plea for national holiday on Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to consider a plea seeking a direction to declare Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti a national holiday.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta said, there are umpteen religious holidays in the country and not one more was needed.

The plea was filed by the All India Shiromani Singh Sabha in 2021 seeking a public holiday across India on the birthday of the tenth Sikh guru.

The bench said it was not inclined to entertain the plea, which also sought directions to issue "specific guidelines for declaration of public or gazetted holiday" in the country.

Justice Mehta orally observed that his uncle, a leading lawyer in Rajasthan, used to say, "India is a holy country of holidays. Let us not add to that, please".

The petitioner's counsel, however, insisted for a uniform policy for public holidays. The counsel argued, "We are saying there is no policy. The Union has to respond...."

However, the bench was not convinced by this contention and declined to entertain the plea.

Lok Sabha revokes suspension of 8 Oppn MPs

AMRITA MADHUKALYA
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Lok Sabha on Tuesday revoked the suspension of eight Opposition members after a consensus was reached at an all-party meeting convened on Monday to break the ongoing deadlock in the House.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said the decision was taken following assurances from leaders across parties to ensure the smooth functioning of the Lok Sabha. He urged members to adhere to the rules of procedure and maintain decorum during proceedings.

"The House runs as per rules and traditions. It is the responsibility of all members to cooperate in ensuring that discussions are conducted in an orderly manner," Birla said, adding that disruptions affect legislative business and the interests of the public.

Soon after, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju moved a motion to revoke the suspension of the eight MPs, which was adopted by the House.

Eight Opposition MPs, including Congress members Gurjeet Singh Aujla, Hibi Eden, Dean Kuriakose, Amrinder Singh Raja Warring, Manickam Tagore, Prashant Yadaorao Padole and Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy, and CPM's S Venkatesan, had been suspended for the remainder of the session that began on February 3. The suspension followed a motion moved by Rijiju and adopted by the House after the MPs tore papers near the Speaker's chair during protests.

According to sources, Opposition leaders conveyed at Monday's all-party meeting that they would allow the House to function while continuing to raise their issues through permitted parliamentary procedures.

The eight MPs had been suspended for unruly conduct and repeated disruptions during proceedings, including entering the Well of the House and raising slogans.

Normal business

With the suspension now revoked, the members are allowed to attend the sittings of the House with immediate effect. The development is expected to help resume normal legislative business, which had been affected by repeated adjournments in recent days.

Following the meeting on Monday, the Lok Sabha Secretariat issued a bulletin reminding MPs to maintain decorum within the Parliament Estate, sources said. The bulletin referred to Direction 124A(2)(iii) of the Speaker's directions, which prohibits certain activities within the Parliament House Estate to keep the area and passages free and accessible for Members of Parliament.

(From left) Congress MPs Prashant Padole, Hibi Eden and Gurjeet Singh Aujla during the second part of the Budget session of Parliament on Tuesday. PTI

READY TO COOPERATE

- Suspension of eight Opposition MPs revoked with immediate effect
- Birla says no placards, posters, photos or AI-generated images will be displayed in the House or inside the Parliament complex
- Oppn ready to cooperate in the smooth functioning of the House

Not every sour relationship is rape: Allahabad HC

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

In a significant ruling, the Allahabad High Court held that failure to fulfil a promise of marriage after a prolonged period of sexual relations does not amount to rape.

A single-judge bench of Justice Avinash Saxena delivered the judgment while allowing a petition challenging the registration of a rape case against Ajay Saini. The complaint had been lodged by a woman who alleged that the man had sexually assaulted her after administering a sedative-laced drink and subsequently continued to exploit her for three years with the promise of marriage.

"This is not a case where the appellant lured the woman solely for physical pleasure and then disappeared. The relationship continued for three years, which is a considerable period of time. They remained close and emotionally involved. In such cases, physical intimacy that occurred during the course of a functioning relationship cannot be branded as rape merely because the relationship did not culminate in marriage," the court said.

In cases where a woman knowingly maintains a prolonged physical relationship, it cannot be assumed with certainty that the intimacy was solely due to the man's alleged promise of marriage. Unless it is clearly shown that the relationship was entirely based on that promise, with no other considerations, consent cannot be said to have been vitiated by a misconception of fact, it added.

This court said that it had, on many occasions, taken note of the troubling tendency of failed or broken relationships given the colour of criminality.

"The offence of rape, being of the gravest kind, must be invoked only in cases involving genuine sexual violence, coercion, or absence of free consent. To convert every sour relationship into an offence of rape not only trivialises the seriousness of the offence but also imposes indelible stigma and grave injustice upon the accused. The misuse of the criminal justice machinery in this regard is a matter of profound concern and calls for condemnation," the HC said.

Key ruling

- HC allows petition challenging rape case
- Says relationship lasted 3 yrs, with emotional involvement
- Intimacy in a functioning relationship cannot be branded rape merely because marriage did not follow

Kyiv lodges protest over arrest of Ukrainians in India

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Kyiv has lodged a protest with New Delhi over the arrest of six Ukrainian citizens by the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

Oleksandr Polishchuk, Ukraine's envoy to New Delhi, met Sibi George, Secretary (West) in the Ministry of External Affairs, and handed over an official note of protest seeking the immediate release of the six Ukrainians.

The six Ukrainians, along with an American citizen, were arrested in a coordinated NIA operation at airports in Delhi, Lucknow and Kolkata on March 13.

'Training militias'

Though the agency has not officially disclosed the reasons for the arrests, the seven foreigners are accused of illegally crossing into Myanmar from Mizoram to provide weapons training to militias in the Southeast Asian country.

> Contrary to established international practice, the Embassy of Ukraine in the Republic of India did not receive any official notification from the competent authorities of India regarding the detention of Ukrainian citizens.
>
> **UKRAINIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY**

> We are aware of the situation. For privacy reasons, we cannot comment on cases involving US citizens.
>
> **US EMBASSY SPOKESPERSON**

Kyiv, however, said in a statement that the Ukrainian citizens were detained in India for unauthorised presence in Mizoram, the northeastern state that requires a special permit for entry, and for illegal crossing of the state border between India and Myanmar.

"At present, the competent authorities of India are conducting the relevant investigative actions. As of now, there are no established facts proving the involvement of the said Ukrainian citizens in unlawful activities on the territory of India or Myanmar," said the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

The American and the six Ukrainians have been booked under Section 18 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. They were produced before a Delhi court on Monday and remanded to 11 days of NIA custody.

A spokesperson for the US Embassy said the mission was aware of the case but declined further comment.

"On March 16, a court hearing took place, which was also attended by representatives of the embassy; however, they were not granted the opportunity to communicate directly with the detainees," the Ukrainian Embassy said.

14 arrested over 'iftar' party on boat in Varanasi

LUCKNOW, DHNS: Fourteen Muslim youths were arrested for organising an 'iftar' gathering (meal eaten after sunset during Ramzan) on a boat in the middle of the Ganga and allegedly throwing the bones into the river in Varanasi.

According to police sources here, the action against the youths came after a video purportedly showing them consuming non-vegetarian food on the boat and throwing the bones into the river — considered sacred by Hindus — went viral on social media on Tuesday.

The incident took place on Monday, sources said.

A complaint in this regard was lodged with the police by BJP city president Rajat Jaiswal. He said in his complaint that the incident had hurt the religious sentiments of Hindus.

Sources said the police arrested the youths after examining the authenticity of the video. "Ganga is a sacred river... such incidents cannot be tolerated... strict action should be taken against the guilty," he said.

Saffron leaders have also demanded action against the boatman who allowed his boat to be used for the 'iftar' gathering.

Police said the youths had been booked for hurting religious sentiments and other relevant sections of the BNS. "We are investigating the matter and ensuring stern action against those found guilty," said a police official in Varanasi.

Muslims who observe 'roza' (the daily fast during the holy month of Ramzan) break their fast in the evening, which is known as 'iftar'.

BENGALURU CENTRAL CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer, Electrical Division, 16th Floor, PU Building, MG Road, Bengaluru-01

No.BCCC/EE/ELE/TEND/07/2025-26 Date: 17.03.2026

INVITATION FOR TENDER (IFT) (Single cover/Short term)
(Through GOK Kppp Portal only)

Executive Engineer (Ele), BCCC, invites Tenders in accordance with KTPP rules 2000, from eligible contractors registered in Bengaluru Central City Corporation/KPWD/CPWD/Railways/MES/National Highway or any other equivalent central/state government organizations on behalf of the commissioner, BCCC for Electrical work as detailed in the table. The bidders may submit their bids for works given in the table below through KPPP portal of the Government of Karnataka **(www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in)** The bidders are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria specified in clause-3 of the ITT to qualify for award of the contract. **2)** Tender documents may be downloaded from the KPPP portal from **18/03/2026 by 16.30 hrs. 3)** Bids must be submitted online through the KPPP portal on or before **25/03/2026 by 16:00 hrs. 4)** Date of opening of tenders : **26/03/2026 at 16:30 Hrs.**

Sl. No.	Name of the Work/Amount Put to Tender in lakhs/ EMD amount in Rs.
	OTHERS
1	Providing Temporary CCTV Surveillance Cameras on Account of BENGALURU KARAGA-2026 Festivity. Amount Put to Tender : **Rs.12.69 Lakhs,** EMD : **Rs. 32,000/-.** Period For Completion : **05 days.**

Sd/- Executive Engineer, (Ele), BCCC

Government of Karnataka
DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND SPORTS
State Youth Centre, Nrupathunga Road, Bengaluru – 560 001.
Tel: 080-22215601, 22211246, Fax:080-22215602

No: DYES/AP/ES/304/2025-26 Date: 17.03.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION (E- Procurement Portal)

Subject: The Assistasnt Executive Engineer, Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports, State Youth Centre ,Nrupathunga Road, Bangalore-560 001, KARNATAKA INDIA invites Tender to take up the various works at Chikkamagalore and Gadag districts, Karnataka through

Sl. No	Particulars	Amount put to Tender	EMD	Last Date and Time for Submission of Bid	Last Date and Time for Opening of technical bid
1	Development works at Kadur Taluk Stadium	Rs 284.10 Lakhs	Rs 4,26,158	06.04.2026 Time 16:30 hrs	07.04.2026 Time 16.30 Hrs
2	Installation of flood lights around proposed synthetic football Turf Ground at K.H. Patil District Stadium, Gadag-Betageri	Rs 91.23 Lakhs	Rs 1,82,461	02.04.2026 Time 16:00 hrs	04.04.2026 Time 11.30 Hrs

The Tender shall be submitted through e-Procurement Portal **(https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in).** Vendors need to register in the e-Procurement Portal to submit their bids online. The tender document can be viewed free of cost from the e-Procurement Portal. Additional information may be obtained during office hours at the above mentioned Address.

Sd/- Assistant Executive Engineer
Department of Youth Empowerment and sports
[Tender Inviting Authority]

DIPR/CP/6330/Shirdi Sai/2025-26

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No: ಕವಿವಿ/ಜಿಎಡಿ/2025-26/01 Date: 07-03-2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through e-Procurement)

Applications are invited from the eligible Contractors / Agencies to provide the services of **Group-C** Labours for 11 months for serving in various Departments / Administrative Sections / K.U.P.G Centres at Karwar and Gadag and Campuses of Constituent Colleges & Public School. Interested tenderers may participate by quoting their rates through e-procurement portal **https://www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in**.
(1) Tender No. KU/GAD/2025-26, Dated: 09.03.2026. **(2)** Tender Publishing Date: **09.03.2026. (3)** Approximate Tender Amount (11 month): **Rs.5,58,58,187/-. (4)** Tender Form uploading Date: **09.03.2026 afternoon 13.00 hr. (5)** Last Date for Tender Form uploading: **08.04.2026 afternoon 13.00 hr. (6)** Pre-bid meeting date & place **24.03.2026 afternoon 4.00 pm,** Place: Registrar Secretariat, KU Dharwad. **(7)** Opening of Technical bid **09.04.2026 afternoon 13.05 hr. (8)** Opening of Financial bid After opening technical bid. **11.04.2026 afternoon 4.00 pm. (9)** EMD amount of Tender **Rs.22,34,327/-** (paid through e-procurement) 10 Name and Address for corresponding authority The Registrar, Karnatak University, Pavate Nagar, Dharwad-580003. Telephone No. **0836-2215358.**

Sd/-
Registrar

DIPR/Dharwad/1361/Adverto/2025-26

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
(Public Works Department)
Office of the Executive Engineer,
Public Works Department, Division: Yadgir.
GSTIN:29BLR002252F1DR

No.EE/PWD/Divn/YDG/TS-2/e-Tender/2025-26/3458, Dated:16.03.2026

Short Term e-Tender Notification

1) Details of works: On behalf of Governor of Karnataka as per KTPP Amendment 1999-2000 Act 2000 Standard Bid Document KW-2 & 4 Karnataka Public Works Department invited item Rate Tender under KPPP Portal in Two Cover System from Eligible Agency/Contractors for following works Under KKRDB (Plan) for the year 2025-26 Under Yadgir Taluka-(1)34590, (2)33889 and (3)33681 and Shahapur Taluka-(1)34459 Total 4 (Four) works Tender Called **2) Amount Put to Tender:** Miminimum Rs 46.18 Lakhs and Maximum Rs.400.00 Lakhs **3) Contractor Eligible Details:** Civil Class-III & Above **4) Tender Procesing Fee and EMD Details:**Tender Fee, EMD & Period as per kppp portal, **5) Last Date & Time for Tender Pre-Bid Meeting:** 18.03.2026 (11.30 hrs Onwards) **6) Last Date & Time for Tender queries/Clarification:** 24.03.2026 (Upto 17.30 hrs) **7) Last Date & Time for Reciept of the tender in e-KPPP portal:** 27.03.2026 (Upto 16.00 hrs) **8) Date & Time of Opening of the Tender/Technical Bid:** 31.03.2026 (11.30 hrs Onwards) **9) Date & Time of Opening of the Financial Bid:** 02.04.2026 (11.30 hrs Onwards) **10) For More Details Contact:** Office of the Executive Engineer, PWD Division : Yadgir. **11) Website Address:** https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in
NOTE: Any Corrections / Changes will be updated in the kppp Portal only

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
PWD Division, Yadgir.

DIP/YDG/599/KSMC&A/2025-26

Wangchuk opens door to 'give and take' on Ladakh

Key regional groupings continue to hold firm on their core positions

ZULFIKAR MAJID
SRINAGAR, DHNS

Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk during a press conference in New Delhi. PTI

Days after his release from detention, climate activist and education reformer Sonam Wangchuk has struck a conciliatory note on Ladakh's political demands, signalling openness to a "give and take" approach with the Centre, even as key regional groupings continue to hold firm on their core positions.

Wangchuk said Ladakh's principal demands remain inclusion under the Sixth Schedule and full statehood, but indicated flexibility if negotiations move towards a mutually beneficial outcome.

"If not on both, at least one... it should not be a lose-lose," he said, pitching for a "win-win" solution.

His remarks come at a crucial moment, with protests intensifying across Leh and Kargil even after his release. Thousands have rallied in recent days under the banners of the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), reiterating demands for constitutional safeguards.

The agitation traces back to 2019, when Ladakh was carved out as a Union Territory without a legislature from the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, triggering concerns over the protection of land, jobs and cultural identity.

Protesters have since demanded Sixth Schedule status—which grants autonomy to tribal regions—and full-fledged statehood.

In his first public remarks after release, Wangchuk emphasised that the movement's intent was dialogue, not confrontation, saying people "just wanted talks" with Centre.

Despite this conciliatory outreach, the LAB and KDA have maintained a hard line, insisting that both Sixth Schedule status and statehood are non-negotiable. The two bodies have also reiterated their broader four-point agenda, including safeguards for local employment and separate parliamentary representation.

The Centre, for its part, has indicated continued engagement with Ladakhi stakeholders through formal and informal channels, though no concrete breakthrough has been announced so far.

Wangchuk's calibrated shift towards pragmatism introduces a new dynamic within the movement, potentially opening space for negotiations.

With protests ongoing and dialogue yet to yield results, Ladakh appears headed for a critical phase.

Karur stampede: DMK MLA appears before CBI

CHENNAI, DHNS: Former Tamil Nadu Minister and DMK MLA, V Senthil Balaji, appeared before the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in New Delhi on Tuesday in connection with the stampede at actor Vijay's rally in Karur on September 27, 2025, which killed 41 people.

Balaji's appearance comes just two days after TVK chief Vijay showed up before the CBI for the third time in two months. Balaji being summoned by the CBI is a significant development since he was not named in the case by the CBI or in the FIR filed by the Tamil Nadu police.

He was questioned for about five hours.

TVK has been wildly alleging that Balaji was responsible for the stampede by pointing to his arrival at a hospital where people who fainted at the rally were taken within minutes of the incident.

Sources told *DH* that Balaji was questioned on the claims by TVK that water bottles that were distributed to people at the rally had the name of his trust and about video evidences purportedly submitted by the actor's party.

Investigations into the stampede attained political colour in October when the TVK publicly accused that the DMK was behind the incident.

Issuing summons to both Vijay and Balaji, who hail from Karur, is seen as an attempt to bring the issue to the fore ahead of the assembly elections.

Centre okays excavations at Keeladi, 7 other sites in TN

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

After sitting on the proposal by the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology (TNSDA) for eight months, the Central Advisory Board of Archaeology (CABA) has finally given its approval for conducting excavations in seven new locations and in an existing location in the state.

The new locations where excavations will be held this year are Vellalore (Coimbatore), Thelunganur (Salem), Adichanur (Kallakurichi), Manikkollai (Cuddalore), Nagapattinam, Pattanamarudur (Thoothukudi), and Karivalamvanthanallur (Tenkasi), while digging in Keeladi, a Sangam Era site, will enter the 11th season.

"We have received the permission. We will launch the excavations very soon," a source aware of the developments told *DH*. The launch will be a low-key affair due to the Model of Conduct (MCC) as Tamil Nadu goes to assembly polls on April 23.

The permission from CABA under the Union Ministry of Culture comes weeks after Chief Minister M K Stalin nudged the Centre to grant the approval at the earliest.

"After months of delay, the Union government has cleared archaeological excavations at 8 sites, including Keeladi. This is a win earned through DMK's persistent efforts. But we are not done. The Union BJP Government is still sitting on the Keeladi excavation report. We will not stop until that too is out," Stalin said on Tuesday.

In the 2025-2026 budget, the government allotted a record Rs 7 crore for carrying out excavations and scientific research, including dating of artefacts, Metallurgical and DNA analyses, and Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL) dating, in the upcoming financial year.

Excavations in Keeladi, a nondescript village near Madurai that is likely to be 2,600 years old based on AMS dating of artefacts found in 2018, will enter their 11th phase this year.

Families of Balimela martyrs get house site pattas

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

Telangana Director General of Police B Shivadhar Reddy, handed over house title deeds to the family members of police personnel who were martyred in the Balimela incident.

While handing over the documents on Tuesday, Shivadhar Reddy said the brutal massacre at the Balimela Reservoir in Odisha in 2008, where Maoists attacked and killed 38 police personnel, continues to remain a deeply painful memory for the police fraternity.

The DGP recalled that the tragic incident of June 29, 2008, wherein 38 personnel, including 32 brave Greyhounds commandos, lost their lives in a sudden Maoist attack.

DGP expressed that the tragedy occurred within two months of his assuming charge as DIG, Special Intelligence Branch (SIB). He further noted that persistent efforts were made over the years to secure land allocation on the outskirts of Hyderabad, with the objective of extending support and recognition to the families of the martyrs.

The DGP expressed satisfaction that a long-pending issue spanning nearly 18 years has finally been resolved. He stated that this was made possible due to the special initiative taken by the Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, whose commitment ensured justice to the families of the martyrs.

It may be recalled that on June 29, 2008, Maoists carried out a sudden and intense attack on a motor launch (steamer boat) carrying around 60 Greyhounds commandos and police personnel in the Balimela Reservoir, near Chitrakonda in Malkangiri district of Odisha.

MISCELLANY

◆ COMICS ◆

Blondie

OUR ROCK BAND IS GONNA PLAY AT THE CHRISTMAS DANCE THIS YEAR!
WOW! WHAT AN HONOR!
YEAH...BUT I'M A LITTLE NERVOUS
WHAT ABOUT?
I'M NOT SURE WE CAN PULL OFF A HEAVY METAL VERSION OF "SILENT NIGHT"!

Hagar The Horrible

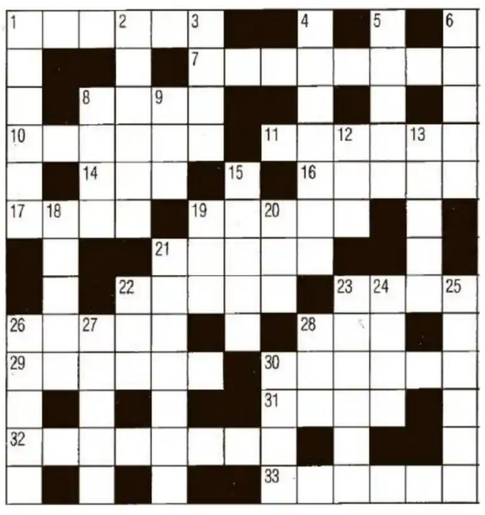
Beetle Bailey

Peanuts

EUDORA GAVE MY BLANKET TO THE CAT NEXT DOOR?!
WELL, GET IT BACK!!
YOU'RE NOT AFRAID OF A CAT, ARE YOU?
I AM WHEN HE WEIGHS TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS!

Marvin

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 12376



CRYPTIC

ACROSS
1 Complain against the repetitiveness? (6)
7 Short of time? (5,3)
8 They're useful when moulding a new side (4)
10 It flies North, perhaps, out East (6)
11 Fish lying on the bed? (6)
14 A fifty pound total (3)
16 It's my disorder that makes things so hazy (5)
17 Is she ruddy beautiful? (4)
19 Chap touring a film centre in Italy (5)
21 Figures to accept a poem as perfect (5)
22 So placed as to sit on the end of the bed (5)
23 Never hit an unmarried woman (4)
26 Where some players sit and read their notes (5)
28 A standard of soft warm-heartedness? (3)
29 At half time, left a note for the king (6)
30 Possibly signed drawing (6)
31 Cars can turn round in them (4)
32 Not moderately biased? (8)
33 My dog? (6)

DOWN
1 She has many an alternative choice (6)
2 Chiefly sorts the N.Y. mail (6)
3 A trusty heart can be a bad thing! (4)
4 New medical system? (7)
5 Sharp instruments? (5)
6 Condemn a railway after one short month (5)
8 To a doctor and sailor, it's dull (4)
9 It can easily get out of hand (3)
12 Form an attachment with happiness at heart (3)
13 General attitude of people in fishnet hosiery (5)
15 Extra deliveries (5)
18 Angry about an anagram? (5)
19 An abbreviation of automotive relevance (3)
20 Guided by a little light (3)
21 I'd a slim chance of getting lost (7)
22 Could an Eskimo use one? (3)
23 Could be lucky at many a meeting place (6)
24 Fairish girl? (4)
25 The more developed one, sir? (6)
26 Singular data (5)
27 The employees sat around being very noisy (5)
28 By being a bit superior (3)
30 Some time in a daze, we hear (4)

ACROSS
1 Easily bent (6)
7 Proof (8)
8 Close friend (4)
10 Noisy quarrel (6)
11 Straightforward (6)
14 Manage (3)
16 Irritates (5)
17 Decomposes (4)
19 Light motorcycle (5)
21 Loses colour (5)
22 Mature (5)
23 Buy food, clothes, etc. (4)
26 Devil (5)
28 Flying insect (3)
29 Primary source (6)
30 Vegetable (6)
31 Red meat (4)
32 Expression of gratitude (5,3)
33 Sausage, slang (6)

DOWN
1 Filch (6)
2 Counting frame (6)
3 Golf pegs (4)
4 Respects highly (7)
5 Prepare to pray (5)
6 Canvas shelters (5)
8 Market, trading centre (4)
9 Shade of brown (3)
12 To free (3)
13 Musical instrument (5)
15 Sing like the Swiss (5)
18 Acting Award (5)
19 Orienteering aid (3)
20 Writing tool (3)
21 Fussy (7)
22 Torn cloth (3)
23 Church talk (6)
24 Parsley, for example (4)
25 Glib rapid speech (6)
26 Direction (5)
27 Very strong person (5)
28 Bleat (3)
30 Stout stick (4)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 12375

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 1, Speed 6, Ess-EN 9, Vin-cent 10, Re(d)cap 11, G-A-u-Dy 12, Slily 13, Liberal 15, Lad 17, A-X-Ed. 18, Aspir-e 19, P-L-ush 20, Chilly 22, Dell 24, Hen 25, Camelot 26, Steam 27, Rad-I-o 28, Earth 29, Zoology 30, Admen 31, Os-I-er.
DOWN: 2, Prefix 3, E-V-aded 4, Dip 5, Scull (skull) 6, English 7, Stay 8, End-ear 12, Sally 13, Larch 14, Begin 15, Libel 16, Dealt 18, As-Sam 19, Pla-too-n 21, Herald 22, D-el-ays 23, Lot-tie 25, Cable 26, Size 28, E.g.-O.

EASY
ACROSS: 1, Hippo 6, Aired 9, Orchard 10, Slope 11, Boxer 12, Vigil 13, Angular 15, Mel 17, Odin 18, Gemini 19, Buyer 20, Tenure 22, Saga 24, Ant 25, Satanic 26, Limit 27, Rural 28, Fangs 29, Slender 30, Dense 31, Diary.
DOWN: 2, Island 3, Popgun 4, Ore 5, Chair 6, Arbiter 7, Idol 8, Eleven 12, Vague 13, Aorta 14, Giant 15, Milan 16, Lilac 18, Get at 19, Braille 21, Endure 22, Safari 23, Ginger 25, Signs 26, Lass 28, Fed.

◆SU-DO-KU-6857◆

7	8	1		4				3
	2							4
			1	3	7		2	
	7		8			6		
		8	6	2	3	7		
		9			1		8	
	3		7	9	6			
9							5	
2				1		8	9	6

easy

6	9	8	1	7	5	2	4	3
7	2	3	6	4	8	5	1	9
4	1	5	2	9	3	6	7	8
9	4	6	5	3	2	1	8	7
1	8	2	4	6	7	9	3	5
3	5	7	8	1	9	4	2	6
8	3	1	9	5	4	7	6	2
2	6	9	7	8	1	3	5	4
5	7	4	3	2	6	8	9	1

SOLUTION TO 6856

To solve the puzzle: To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

SCRABBLE™

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T1 R1 G2 O1 V4 E1 I1 — 1st Letter Double — RACK 1
H4 N1 I1 I1 G2 C3 T1 — RACK 2
T1 A1 A1 L1 M3 N1 C3 — Double Word Score — RACK 3
T1 I1 B3 G2 M3 A1 E1 — Triple Word Score — RACK 4

PAR SCORE 185-195
by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

M3 I1 D2 D2 L1 E1 S1 — RACK 1 = 61
G2 U1 R1 G2 L1 E1 S1 — RACK 2 = 63
D2 E1 F4 R1 A1 U1 D2 — RACK 3 = 74
U1 N1 C3 I1 V4 I1 L1 — RACK 4 = 62
PAR SCORE 170-180 — JUDD'S TOTAL 260

HITORI-3311

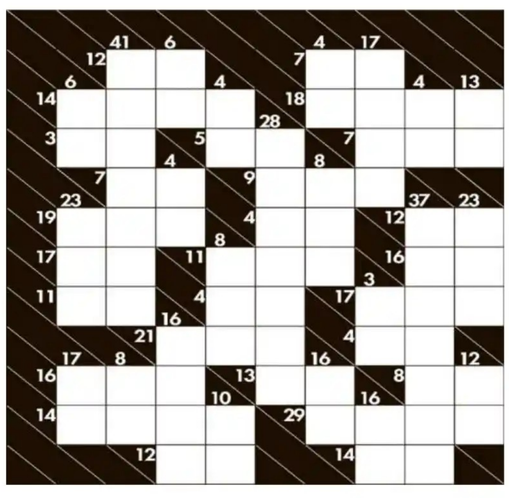
6	2	7	1	8	5	4	3
7	5	6	4	3	1	3	8
7	3	4	3	5	1	1	7
2	6	1	8	3	4	5	4
4	1	8	4	2	1	6	1
3	8	1	5	3	2	3	5
8	1	3	3	6	3	2	4
3	2	3	1	4	7	8	8

SOLUTION TO 3310

■	7	8	5	4	■	2	3
1	8	7	■	6	3	■	5
5	■	4	1	■	2	7	8
8	1	3	■	2	■	4	■
■	4	■	3	1	8	5	6
2	■	5	4	8	■	1	■
7	6	2	8	■	5	■	4
■	5	■	6	7	4	8	1

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

KAKURO- 3311



SOLUTION TO 3310

To solve the puzzle: Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

SU DO KU X - 3859

8								
3						4		
							1	5
			4					
					5		8	
	1	4		7	6	5	2	
						9	7	
6		3		9				
		7						

SOLUTION TO 3858

7	6	4	9	3	8	2	5	1
8	1	2	5	4	7	9	6	3
3	9	5	1	6	2	7	8	4
9	7	8	6	1	5	3	4	2
5	4	3	7	2	9	6	1	8
6	2	1	3	8	4	5	9	7
2	3	9	4	5	1	8	7	6
1	8	7	2	9	6	4	3	5
4	5	6	8	7	3	1	2	9

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

JUMBLE®

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

FRDAT
WRABN
YTREOH
ALRMEO

I'm meeting everyone downtown. Do you want to come?
Not tonight. I'm starting my class tomorrow. I want to be prepared.
Learn ASL: Conversation and Culture
SHE WAS GOING TO TAKE A SIGN LANGUAGE CLASS AND DECIDED TO READ ABOUT IT ---

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

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Answer here: _____ (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: THIEF DODGE ALPACA HYMNAL
Answer: When they used their spa gift cards to get massages, they — HAD A "FEEL" DAY

MAJOR CHALLENGE

Global airlines hike fares, cut routes as fuel costs balloon

Conflict disrupts global aviation, affects routes and operations

REUTERS

Global airlines sounded the alarm on Tuesday over soaring jet fuel prices triggered by the US-Israeli war against Iran, warning of hundreds of millions of dollars in additional costs, higher fares and cuts to some routes.

Delta Air Lines Chief Executive Ed Bastian said the sharp rise in jet fuel prices had increased the airline's costs by as much as USD 400 million in March alone. The industry is moving quickly to pass on higher expenses through fare hikes, he told a J.P. Morgan industrials conference.

American Airlines said it expects a USD 400 million increase in first-quarter expenses due to fuel costs. Among the first to act, Scandinavia's biggest airline, SAS AB, said it is cutting a limited number of flights because of the "sharp and sudden increase" in fuel prices.

"The entire European aviation system is now feeling the pressure from a sudden fuel shock," it said in an email.

The war, now in its third week, has thrown global aviation into turmoil, with flights cancelled, rescheduled or rerouted as most West Asia airspace remains closed amid fears of missile and drone attacks. Jet fuel prices have emerged as a major challenge, pushing up operating costs, with European prices doubling and Asian prices rising by almost 80 per cent since the start of US and Israeli strikes on Iran in late February.

Fuel is the industry's second-largest expense after labour, typically accounting for a fifth to a quarter of operating costs. US airlines largely stopped hedging fuel in the past two decades, and SAS said last year it had not hedged any of its fuel consumption for the following 12 months. Vietnamese authorities have warned the country's aviation industry to prepare for potential flight reductions from April after China and Thailand halted jet fuel exports due to the war, heightening the risk of shortages.

The United Arab Emirates briefly closed its airspace on Tuesday in response to incoming missile and drone threats from Iran, the second consecutive day of disruption after a drone caused a fire near Dubai airport on Monday.

About 86,000 passengers travelling through Frankfurt Airport, one of Europe's largest, were affected by cancellations in the first two weeks of the war. Only one-third of weekly connections between the airport and West Asia are operating now, CEO Stefan Schulte said on Tuesday.

The mounting cost warnings show how the shockwaves from the conflict are spreading far beyond West Asia as airlines navigate their biggest crisis since the COVID pandemic. Delta's Bastian said the carrier is well positioned to recover fuel costs and can adjust capacity if elevated prices persist. Still, airlines will need to tread carefully with fare hikes at a time of fragile consumer confidence.

Air France-KLM announced plans last week to increase long-haul ticket prices to offset surging fuel costs.

Suicide blasts kill 23 in Nigeria's Maiduguri

MAIDUGURI (NIGERIA), AP/PTI: At least 23 people were killed and more than 100 wounded in suspected suicide bombings on Monday night that targeted Maiduguri city in northeastern Nigeria, police said on Tuesday.

It was one of the deadliest attacks in the conflict-battered city in recent history.

Residents and emergency services earlier told The Associated Press that three explosions were reported in crowded places in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state, including a major market and the entrance of the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital.

"Regrettably, a total of 23 persons lost their lives, while 108 others sustained varying degrees of injuries," Borno police spokesperson Nahum Kenneth Daso said in a statement that blamed the attacks on suspected suicide bombers.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attacks, but suspicion quickly fell on the Boko Haram jihadi group, which in 2009 launched an insurgency in northeastern Nigeria to enforce its radical interpretation of Shariah.

Boko Haram has since grown stronger, with thousands of fighters and different factions, including the Islamic State West Africa Province, which is backed by the Islamic State group.

US counterterror chief quits over Iran war

Joe Kent says Iran posed no imminent threat

WASHINGTON, AP/PTI

Joe Kent, director of the National Counterterrorism Center, announced his resignation on Tuesday, saying he "could not in good conscience" support the Trump administration's war in Iran.

Kent said on social media that Iran "posed no imminent threat to the US, and it is clear that we started this war due to pressure from Israel and its powerful American lobby".

There was no immediate comment from the White House.

Kent, a former political candidate with connections to right-wing extremists, was confirmed to his post last July on a 52–44 vote. As head of the National Counterterrorism Center, he led an agency tasked with analysing and detecting terrorist threats.

Before joining the Trump administration, Kent ran two unsuccessful campaigns for Congress in Washington state. He also served in the military, completing 11 deployments as a Green Beret, followed by work at the CIA.

Democrats strongly opposed Kent's confirmation, pointing to his past ties to far-right figures and conspiracy theories. During his Senate confirmation hearing, Kent refused to distance himself from a conspiracy theory that federal agents instigated the attack at the Capitol, as well claims that Trump won the 2020 election. Democrats also grilled Kent over his participation in a chat on Signal used by Trump's national security team to discuss sensitive military plans.

US President Donald Trump meets with Taoiseach of Ireland Micheál Martin during a bilateral meeting at the White House in Washington DC on Tuesday. AFP

DONALD TRUMP
US President

"I always thought he was very weak on security...It's a good thing he is out.

Trump lashes out at Nato, allies after Hormuz snub

WASHINGTON, AP/PTI: US President Donald Trump on Tuesday criticised Nato and key allies after they declined his call to help secure the Strait of Hormuz amid the ongoing war with Iran, before asserting that the US does not need their support.

Trump had renewed his appeal for international partners to help restore shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, urging countries that rely on the critical oil transit corridor to take part in safeguarding the waterway. However, his push brought no immediate commitments.

Expressing frustration, Trump said the US was not receiving support "despite the fact that almost every country strongly agreed with what we are doing, and that Iran cannot" be allowed to develop a nuclear weapon. "Because of the fact that we have had such military success, we no longer 'need,' or desire, the Nato countries' assistance—we never did. Likewise, Japan, Australia, or South Korea," Trump said in a post on Truth Social.

China to provide humanitarian aid to Iran, Lebanon

BEIJING, PTI: China on Tuesday said it will provide emergency humanitarian assistance to Iran, Lebanon and two other West Asian countries hit hard by the ongoing conflict in the region.

Speaking at a media briefing, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said that Beijing has decided to provide emergency humanitarian aid to Iran, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq in the hope of easing the humanitarian plight faced by people in these countries. "The ongoing conflict has inflicted severe humanitarian suffering on the people of Iran and other regional countries. China deeply sympathises with the people in the affected countries," Lin said.

He was responding to a question on whether China is considering providing humanitarian aid, as the UN Refugee Agency recently said the crisis in West Asia has become a major emergency, with the affected regions already hosting nearly 25 million refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees.

Iran has suffered many civilian casualties and about 8,00,000 people in Lebanon have been displaced.

India slams Pak over Ahmadiyya persecution, Af air-bombings

UNITED NATIONS, PTI: India called out Pakistan for its habit of "fabricating imaginative tales of Islamophobia" in neighbouring countries, questioning how Islamabad's own brutal repression of Ahmadiyyas or air-bombing campaigns during Ramadan against Afghanistan can be characterised.

"India's western neighbour is an excellent example of fabricating imaginative tales of Islamophobia in its neighbourhood," India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish, said.

"One wonders what the brutal repression of Ahmadiyyas in this country would be termed, or the large-scale refoulement of helpless Afghans, or air-bombing campaigns during the holy month of Ramadan," Harish said.

Harish was addressing the UN General Assembly commemoration of the International Day to Combat Islamophobia on Monday.

In a strong retort, he also said that the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, which "our western neighbour has systematically attempted to weaponise against India", has repeatedly made false and baseless allegations against India.

He stressed that it is important for the UN to take note of the rising trend and dangers of weaponising religious identity and instrumentalising it to serve narrow political ends by state and non-state actors alike.

400 killed in Pak attack on Afghan hospital

Pakistan insists targets were militant sites

ISLAMABAD, PTI

Pakistan overnight carried out "precision airstrikes" targeting what it described as terrorists and their support infrastructure across Afghanistan, but the Afghan government accused Islamabad of bombing a rehabilitation hospital in Kabul, killing at least 400 people.

The latest strikes came as Operation Ghazab lil Haq, launched on February 26, continued, according to Pakistan's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Pakistan launched the operation in response to alleged attacks by Afghan Taliban forces along the 2,600-km-long border.

"Pakistan's Armed Forces successfully carried out precision airstrikes on the night of March 16 as part of Operation Ghazab lil Haq, targeting Afghan Taliban regime terrorism-sponsoring military installations in Kabul and Nangarhar," Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said.

He claimed that technical support infrastructure and ammunition storage facilities at two locations in Kabul were effectively destroyed. "The visible secondary detonations after the strikes clearly indicate the presence of large ammunition depots," he added. He further claimed that four Afghan Taliban regime "terrorism-sponsoring" military sites were struck in Nangarhar, destroying associated logistics, ammunition and technical infrastructure.

However, Hamdullah Fitrat, deputy spokesman of the Afghan Taliban-led government, said the bombardment by Pakistan targeted a drug rehabilitation centre in the Afghan capital, resulting in the deaths of at least 400 people.

People stand next to a drug rehabilitation hospital destroyed by a Pakistani air strike in Kabul on Tuesday. REUTERS

Russia backs Cuba after Trump remarks escalate tensions

MOSCOW, REUTERS

Russia said it had unwavering solidarity with Cuba on Tuesday after US President Donald Trump said he expected to have the honour of "taking Cuba" and that "I can do anything I want" with the Communist-run island republic.

Without mentioning Trump by name, Russia's foreign ministry expressed serious concern about the escalation of tensions around what it described as the "Island of Liberty". "Russia reaffirms its unwavering solidarity with the government and fraternal people of Cuba," the ministry said. "We strongly condemn attempts at gross interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state, intimidation, and the use of illegal unilateral restrictive measures."

Trump has stepped up economic pressure on Cuba, imposing an oil blockade that has crippled its already obsolete power generation system.

The New York Times reported that removing Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel from office was a key US objective. Citing four people familiar with the talks, the report said US officials have signalled to Cuban negotiators that Díaz-Canel must go, while leaving the next steps to the Cubans. The Kremlin said it was in contact with Cuban leadership and that Moscow was ready to provide all possible assistance.

"Today, Liberty Island is facing unprecedented challenges, which have become a direct result of the long-term trade, economic and financial embargo, and more recently, the US energy blockade against Cuba," Russia's foreign ministry said. Russia said it has provided and will continue to provide Cuba with the necessary support, including financial assistance.

Russia was deprived of an ally when the US toppled Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro, though it has benefited from high oil prices triggered by the US and Israeli attack on Iran, a strategic partner of Moscow.

Migrants vanish in 'invisible shipwrecks' amid data blackout

ROME, AP/PTI: Bodies wash ashore day after day. Phone calls from relatives go unanswered. Migrants' tents are abandoned overnight.

Migrants trying to reach Europe are vanishing in droves in what are known as "invisible shipwrecks", but governments responsible for search and rescue are withholding information about what they know.

The beginning of 2026 ranks as the deadliest start to any year for people attempting to cross the Mediterranean — an unprecedented 682 confirmed missing as of March 16 — according to the UN International Organisation for Migration. But the real death toll is almost certainly much higher.

Rights groups are increasingly struggling to verify tolls as Italy, Tunisia and Malta have quietly restricted information on migrant rescues and shipwrecks along the deadliest migration route in the world. The news barely makes headlines, in part because the lack of transparency prevents journalists from confirming reports. "It's a strategy of silence," said Matteo Villa, a researcher focusing on migration and data at the Italian Institute for International Political Studies think tank. The organisation Refugees in Libya and other human rights groups have been sounding the alarm since late January, reporting over 1,000 missing after Cyclone Harry hit the region.

WORLD AT A GLANCE

CA Kenya Wildlife Services warden displays some of the syringe cartridges modified to smuggle live ants at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport law courts in Nairobi on Tuesday. AFP

Vatican declares mistrial in 'trial of the century'

▸ The Vatican appeals tribunal on Tuesday declared a mistrial in the Holy See's "trial of the century", a stunning blow to both Pope Francis' legacy and Vatican prosecutors who had put a cardinal and several others on trial over alleged financial crimes, AP/PTI reports from Rome.

The appeals court said that both Francis and Vatican prosecutors made procedural errors that nullified the original indictment and required a new trial. The court set June 22 as the date for the new trial to begin. The ruling was a win for the defence and a major setback for Vatican prosecutors, who have been scrambling to salvage their case. The prosecution and 2023 convictions against Cardinal Angelo Becciu and others had been cited by the late pope as evidence of his willingness to crack down on financial misconduct. The case focused on the Vatican's investment of 350 million euros in London. Prosecutors alleged that brokers and Vatican monsignors fleeced the Holy See of tens of millions of euros in fees and commissions to acquire the property, and then extorted 15 million euros from it to cede control.

Xi's books burnt in Nepal college

▸ Multiple copies of a book written by Chinese President Xi Jinping were burnt at a college in Nepal, prompting the Chinese mission here to issue a diplomatic note to the Home Ministry, PTI reports from Kathmandu.

According to media reports, old books were burnt at the Manmohan Technical Institute in Koshi province's Morang district on Saturday to make space in the college library. These included several copies of The Governance of China written by Xi, the reports said, quoting the college administration. "Some books, including a copy of The Governance of China written by Xi, were burnt at the Manmohan Technical Institute, and the Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu expressed concern over the incident through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs," Home Ministry spokesperson Ananda Kale told PTI.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Nato Secretary General Mark Rutte meet at the 10 Downing Street in London on Tuesday. REUTERS

Spy novelist Len Deighton dies

▸ Len Deighton, a prolific writer whose tough, stylish spy thrillers featured on bestseller lists for decades, has died, at the age of 97, AP/PTI reports from London.

Deighton's literary agent, Tim Bates, said he died on Sunday. No cause of death was given. Deighton's first novel, The IPCRESS File, set the tone for cool 1960s thrillers and was made into a film that helped make a star of Michael Caine. Bates said on Tuesday that Deighton "was not only one of the greatest spy and thriller writers of the 20th century but also one of our greatest writers in any genre".

Innocent man freed after 19 years

▸ A man who spent nearly two decades in prison for a roughly USD 550 robbery was exonerated and freed on Monday after prosecutors said they now agree he did not commit the crime, AP/PTI reports from New York.

"It cost me 20 years, but they said they corrected it now. So that's all that matters. So I'm good with that," Kenneth Windley, 61, said as he left a Brooklyn courthouse, at liberty for the first time since 2007. A judge threw out his conviction and dismissed the case entirely at the request of both prosecutors and Windley's lawyers. Prosecutors said new evidence supported his longstanding claim of innocence.

NVIDIA CEO Jensen Huang and SK Group Chairman Chey Tae-won attend the NVIDIA GTC global AI conference in San Jose, California, on Monday. REUTERS

India growth seen at risk as Iran war shows no sign of easing

Economists warn inflation surge could undo RBI's efforts

BLOOMBERG

Surging oil prices and acute gas shortages are rippling through India's economy as the Iran war drags on, disrupting industries and prompting analysts to cut growth forecasts, while warning of rising inflation.

India is among the economies most exposed to the West Asia crisis as it imports about 90% of its crude oil and nearly half of its LPG. About half of its crude and over three-fourths of LPG imports pass through the Strait of Hormuz, now effectively shut by Iran, pushing oil prices above $100 a barrel.

WAR SHOCKS

The disruption has triggered a cooking gas crisis across households, hotels and restaurants, while industries that rely on LPG are shutting down operations. The shortages are raising concerns about a sharp slowdown in Asia's third-largest economy just as it was recovering from the pandemic.

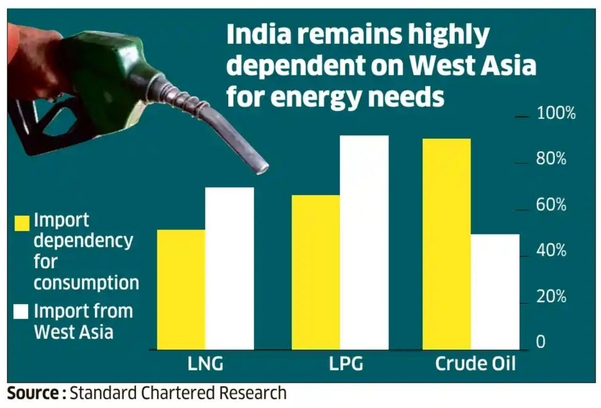
Economists at banks including Goldman Sachs Group, Australia and New Zealand Banking Group and IndusInd Bank expect slower growth due to reliance on imported oil. Goldman last week cut its 2026 growth forecast by half a percentage point to 6.5%, while ANZ sees expansion slowing to 6.5-6.8%, in the fiscal starting April, from about 7%. IndusInd Bank's Gaurav Kapur sees a 30-basis-point hit with growth at around 6.5% and warns weaker consumption could weigh on the recovery.

"The overall impact on growth will be more dampening than inflation," Kapur said. "The government has enough fiscal space to absorb the oil price hit through excise duty cuts, but the hit on the industrial sector will impact growth."

The conflict thousands of miles away is already affecting daily life in India.

Gas rationing is disrupting key industries, from fertiliser and aluminum production to helium used in semiconductor manufacturing, raising the risk of a prolonged drag on growth.

"All heating furnaces use LPG and, given the shortage and curbs on industrial use, factories have shut," said Pankaj Chadha, chairman of the Engineering Exports Promotion Council. "In Gujarat, about 98% of engineering firms are shut, while in Maharashtra around half the units have closed."



Source : Standard Chartered Research

External sector risk

Before the crisis, India's economy appeared to be in a sweet spot. The government projected growth of as much as 7.2% for the next fiscal, while inflation was expected to stay close to RBI's 4% target at least until September.

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra had described the outlook as a "Goldilocks" scenario, with interest rates likely to remain unchanged for an extended period. The external sector has held up relatively well recently, though rising oil prices and a wider trade and current account deficits are emerging risks.

"The external sector has emerged as the most at risk in this crisis" said Anubhuti Sahay, economist with Standard Chartered Plc. "While import cover is still about 10 months, the rupee has to act as the shock absorber."

Exports may suffer as disruptions hit nearly $200 billion of shipments to Gulf countries, potentially widening the CAD and putting pressure on the rupee, already near record lows of around 92.5 per dollar. The region is also critical for remittances, with about 10 million Indian workers sending nearly $50 billion home annually.

Economists warn the inflation surge could undo years of efforts by RBI, which brought price growth under control last year. The central bank had expected retail inflation to remain near its 4% target until at least September.

"Ripple effects would be felt across industries, including restaurants and manufacturing units reliant on LPG," said Shumita Deveshwar, chief economist at GlobalData.TS Lombard.

'Digital economy to account for 20% of GDP by 2030'

MeitY Secy says AI adoption will push upward trajectory

NEW DELHI, PTI

S Krishnan

India's digital economy is projected to account for nearly 20% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2030, driven by a growth rate that is double that of the broader economy, a senior government official said on Tuesday.

Speaking at the Nasscom Global Confluence 2026, Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) Secretary S Krishnan said the digital economy — encompassing information technology, IT-enabled services, and the electronics sector — currently contributes about 13% to India's GDP. This upward trajectory, he noted, will be further accelerated by the increased adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) across sectors.

"Currently at about 13% of India's GDP, we are going twice as fast as the rest of the economy. We'll end up being almost about 20% of India's GDP by 2030," Krishnan said.

Highlighting India's expanding global technology footprint, the secretary pointed out that the country has signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with over 53 nations to support the worldwide expansion of its successful Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) model. These agreements span countries across the Global South, as well as several nations in Europe, and Russia.

Krishnan said India has created a model for applying AI research to DPIs to foster scalable and affordable options for the world. Under the India AI Mission, AI compute infrastructure is now being provided to domestic innovators, entrepreneurs, and researchers at one-third of prevailing market prices.

Additionally, over 10,000 datasets and homegrown AI models have been made available. He expressed confidence that India's software services exports, currently hovering around $250 billion, will not decline, but will undergo a structural shift.

Sensex climbs 567 points

MUMBAI, PTI: Benchmark Sensex climbed 567 points and Nifty closed near 23,600 in their second consecutive day of gains on Tuesday, boosted by a rally in metal and auto shares.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 567.99 points or 0.75% to settle at 76,070.84. During the day, it surged 801.41 points or 1.06% to 76,304.26. The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 172.35 points or 0.74% to end at 23,581.15.

The BSE MidCap Select Index jumped 0.86% and SmallCap Select Index climbed 0.67%. A total of 2,362 stocks advanced, while 1,892 declined and 157 remained unchanged.

JSM Corporation disputes Hard Rock's exit claim, says cafes in India to remain open

BENGALURU, DHNS: A day after Hard Rock International announced the termination of its franchise agreements with JSM Corporation Pvt Ltd, the latter issued a statement on Tuesday expressing "deep shock" at what it called a "unilateral, illegal and misconceived" announcement about the alleged closure of Hard Rock Cafes in India.

JSM clarified that its outlets will continue to operate as usual until any binding court order states otherwise. "The claims are outside the contractual framework and unsupported by any court order," JSM said.

It added that while it is evaluating options, its immediate priority remains employees, customers, partners and suppliers. "We remain fully committed to protecting stakeholder interests and ensuring accurate information is communicated," the statement said.

In a LinkedIn post, JSM reiterated that it is "reviewing the situation and evaluating all legal remedies," adding that its outlets remain open. The company also said the statement by Hard Rock International was issued "without proper consultation or regard" for a partnership spanning over two decades.

Highlighting its role in building the brand in India, JSM said, "For 22 years, we have built and nurtured the Hard Rock Cafe brand in India with the support of our employees, partners and millions of customers."

On Monday, Hard Rock International said it was formally terminating its franchise agreements with JSM Corporation and related entities, covering the operation of all Hard Rock Cafes and Rock Shops in India.

It indicated that all outlets operated by the master franchisee — including those in Bengaluru, Chandigarh, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, New Delhi and Pune — would shut, though it did not cite reasons.

Meanwhile, an email sent by *DH* to Hard Rock International did not elicit any response

NCLT approves Adani's bid to buy Jaiprakash Associates

NEW DELHI, PTI: The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) on Tuesday approved Adani Enterprises Ltd's Rs 14,535-crore bid to acquire Jaiprakash Associates Ltd through the insolvency process.

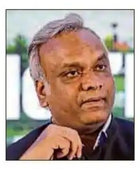
In a regulatory filing, Jaiprakash Associates Ltd (JAL) informed that the NCLT, Allahabad bench, has "orally pronounced an order on March 17, 2026, "approving the resolution plan submitted by Adani Enterprises Ltd".

In November last year, a Committee of Creditors approved the resolution plan by business tycoon Gautam Adani to acquire JAL. Adani Enterprises won the approval of creditors of JAL for its Rs 14,535-crore acquisition proposal for the bankrupt infrastructure group.

State charts course to $329 bn digital economy by 2031-32

BENGALURU, DHNS

Karnataka's digital economy is currently estimated at $159 billion, with projections placing the state at an estimated $329 billion under the conservative scenario and over $400 billion under the stretch scenario by 2031-32.


Priyank Kharge

The Karnataka Digital Economy Mission (KDEM), an initiative of the Karnataka government's Department of Electronics, IT & BT, on Tuesday hosted the KDEM Annual Meet 2026. At the event, KDEM CEO Sanjeev Gupta spoke about digital economy achievements.

According to KDEM's digital economy dashboard, Bengaluru currently absorbs an estimated 85% of the state's economic activity, with Beyond Bengaluru contributing 15%.

At the meet, speakers highlighted KDEM's role as a bridge between government and industry for Karnataka's digital economy, using cluster programmes, industry task forces, and the LEAP initiative. They highlighted the Bengaluru and Beyond idea, with the city as the state's main innovation hub and new tech ecosystems coming up in cities like Mysuru, Mangaluru, Hubballi-Dharwad-Belagavi, Kalaburagi, Shivamogga, Tumakuru and Davanagere.

IT-BT Minister Priyank Kharge said KDEM has scaled into a statewide platform working with over 200 companies and enabling more than 10,000 jobs across clusters, from Mysuru and Hubballi-Dharwad-Belagavi to Mangaluru, transforming them into growth centres with rising exports, new GCCs and hundreds of startups. "Our government-supported, industry-led and results-focused model is now being looked at by states across India. Beyond Bengaluru today contributes nearly 3% of Karnataka's digital economy. By 2030, we are targeting 10%. We have the right policies, the right ecosystem and KDEM as the execution engine to deliver this transformation," he added.

As part of the event, KDEM exchanged an MoU with the Software Technology Parks of India (STPI), aimed at deepening collaboration on startup support, digital infrastructure expansion, and innovation-led growth across Karnataka.

Arvind Kumar, Director General, STPI, said, "This MoU with STPINEXT marks a significant step towards strengthening Karnataka's startup ecosystem through deeper collaboration and shared vision."

TSUYO gets Karnataka govt nod for EV powertrain unit

BENGALURU, DHNS: Deep-tech electric mobility tech firm TSUYO Manufacturing has secured clearance from the Karnataka government to establish a Rs 250-crore EV powertrain manufacturing facility in the Hubballi-Dharwad region. The project will also create over 500 jobs.

TYUYO had in November 2025, signed a Letter of Intent with the state government during the Bengaluru Tech Summit. The facility will focus on developing, manufacturing, and validating advanced EV powertrain technologies, and will comprise integrated facilities for electric traction motors, motor controllers, power electronics, and drivetrain systems, designed to support multiple e-mobility segments.

Vijay Kumar, Founder and CEO, said, "The Hubballi-Dharwad facility will be a significant breakthrough in TSUYO's mission to build a globally-competitive EV powertrain ecosystem from India. With advanced manufacturing, integrated validation infrastructure, and system-level engineering capabilities, this investment will enable us to deliver high-power, high-voltage electric powertrain solutions for both domestic and international markets."

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, DIVISION, CHITRADURGA

No.EE:PWD:CTA:AE-2:Tender-69:2025-26 Dated:- 16.03.2026

SHOR TERM E-TENDER NOTIFICATION

Tenders are invited from registered Contractors in KPWD for the following works through KPPP Portal as per standard tender documents rules.

Name of work :- Two cover System :- Head of Account 3054-03-337-0-05-200 SH Maintainance:- (1) CONDUCTING LAND PLAN SURVEY OF LEFTOVER STATE HIGHWAYS IN PWD CHITRADURGA DIVISION FOR THE YEAR 2025-26 (Indent No: 34180)
Estimate Cost Rs. in Lakhs:-70.33
Head of Account 3054-04-337-1-10-200 MDR Maintainance:- (3) CONDUCTING LAND PLAN SURVEY OF MAJOR DISTRICT AND OTHER ROADS IN PWD CHITRADURGA DIVISION FOR THE YEAR 2025-26 (Indent No: 34182) Estimate Cost Rs. in Lakhs:-168.50
Tenders dates are as mentioned below: Late Date & time for Tender Queries/ Clarifications 23-03-2026 Time: 17.30
Last Date & time for receipt of tenders 24-03-2026 Time: 16.00
Date & time for opening of Technical Bid 25-03-2026 Time: 16.15
Date & time for opening of Financial Bid 27-03-2026 Time: 11.00
Further details can be obtained from this office and H.P. Company helpline Numbers 91 9240214000 and 91 9240214001.

DIPR/CTA/KSMCA/766/2025-26
Sd/- Executive Engineer PWD, Chitradurga.

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
REVENUE DEPARTMENT
Deputy Commissioner's Office, Belagavi District.
Telephone: 0831-2406303/2407200 Email: deo.belagavi@gmail.com

No. : RB/AJSK/CR/19/2025-26-(I) Dated: 16.03.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION

Tender Document for procurement of Data Entry Operators for Atalji Janasnehi Kendra's in Belagavi District Under e-Procurement System

Tender Reference: RB/AJSK/CR/19/2025-26-(I), Commencement of issue of Bid document through E-Procurement Portal of Government of Karnataka: 16-03-2026, Last date for submitting clarification if any: 20-03-2026 up to 5.00 PM, Pre bid Meeting: 20-03-2026 at 11.00 AM, Last date and time for uploading of tender in e-Procurement platform: 24-03-2026 up to 5.00 PM, Time and date of opening of tenders: Technical Bid: 25-03-2026 at 11.00 AM, Time and date of opening of tenders: Commercial Bid: 30-03-2026 at 11.00 AM (if possible), Contact Person for queries: Deputy Commissioner, Belagavi District Telephone: **0831-2406310 E-Mail: ajskbhoomi@gmail.com,** Place of Opening of Tenders and Address for communication: Deputy Commissioner, Belagavi District. EMD Amount: **Rs. 3,89,365/-**

Note: Completed tender shall be uploaded through e-Procurement system only in the manner described under instructions to Tenderers Section I of tender Documents on or before the last date & time stipulated.

DIPR/BELAGAVI/2100/2025-26/DESHPANDEPUBLICITY
Sd/- Deputy Commissioner, Belagavi District.

FOOD SAFETY AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION
Palace Road, Bengaluru-560001

PHARMACIST APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING-CALL-2

Food Safety and Drug Administration, invites online applications **from the D. Pharm (Diploma in Pharmacy) students** who have completed the course during last two years (2024 and 2025) from the Colleges in the State of Karnataka for **Apprenticeship Training for a period of 11 Months**. Selection will be done on Merit Basis.

123 apprentice got selected out of 1000 all over the State, remaining will be filled in second round.

The selected students will be assigned to training at PHCs on counseling basis. Application details can be had in Karnataka Examinations Authority website **(http://kea.kar.nic.in)** and candidates are requested to apply online.

Application will be released on: **20.03.2026.**

Last date for submitting the application: **04.04.2026.**

Minimum Qualification For Eligibility: Passed in D. Pharm (Diploma in Pharmacy) in the preceding two years (2024 and 2025) from the colleges of Karnataka only. Preference will be given to candidates who had got selected under Government Quota. Reservation rules will be as per Government of Karnataka Roster.

Apprenticeship period and stipend: A stipend of **Rs. 8,000/- per month** will be paid for a period of **11 Months** during the Apprenticeship Training.

Online KEA application fees : **Rs.600/-.**

Sd/- Commissioner
Food Safety and Drug Administration

BENGALURU CENTRAL CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer, Chickpete Division, 8th Main, 2nd Block, Jayanagar, Kanakanapalya, Bengaluru-560011.

No: EE/CKP/E-PROC/14/2025-26 **Date: 17-03-2026**

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER
(Two Cover System) (Through GOK KPP Portal only)

Executive Engineer (Chickpete Division), BCCC, Bengaluru invites tenders from eligible Contractors registered in BCCC or equivalent registration with CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES / National Highway or any State Government Organizations for the Construction of Work detailed below.

(Standard Tender Document - KW-3)

Sl. No.	Name of the Work / Category
1	Providing and Erection of Dr. B.R. Amabedkar Statue in BTB Area in Ward No. 153, Jayanagara. **(Others) - Amount Put to Tender (Rs. in Lakhs): 99.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): Rs. 1,98,000/-**

Calendar of Events: 1) The Tender Documents can be Downloaded from the GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in. 2)** Pre Bid Meeting will be held on **23-03-2026 at 15.00 Hours in the Office of the Executive Engineer, Chickpete Division, No. 194, T. Mariyappa Road, Opp. to Lalbagh South Gate, Siddapura Circle, Bengaluru - 560011. 3)** Last Date for Uploading the Filled Tender Document is **25-03-2026 upto 16.00 Hours. 4)** Date of Opening of Technical Bid: **26-03-2026 at 16.30 Hours. 5)** Date of Opening of Financial Bid: **After Technical Bid Approved.** Further details can be had from the above office.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer, Chickpet Division, BCCC.

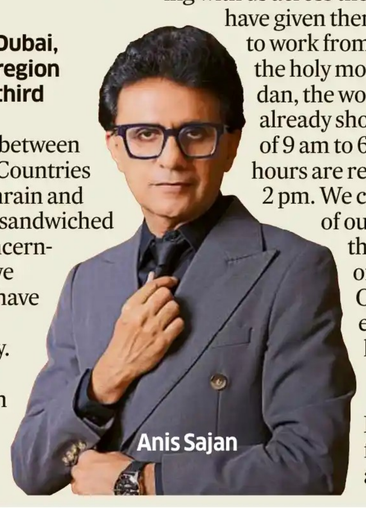
DH INTERVIEW

'Situation concerning, but Indian workers well-protected in Dubai'

Nearly 1 crore Indians, who live and work in West Asia, have been caught in the crossfire due to the US-Israel-Iran war. Apart from the severe safety risks, the ongoing conflict has also created an environment of job insecurity. Around 1 lakh Indians have already returned home from the Gulf region due to the volatile security situation. Thousands of Indians who have invested in the property markets of Dubai and the other Gulf cities fear sharp erosion in valuation. Danube Group is one of the leading Indian-led real estate developers and employers in the Gulf region. In an interview with **Gyanendra Keshri** of *DH*, Danube Group Vice-Chairman **Anis Sajan** talks about the evolving situation in Dubai amid the ongoing conflict. In the virtual interview from the company's headquarters in Dubai, Sajan delves into the impact of the conflict — on the UAE economy and property markets. *Edited excerpts:*

How is the situation in Dubai, with the conflict in the region now stretching into its third week?

This unfortunate war is between Iran, Israel and the US. Countries like the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia have been sandwiched in it. The situation is concerning, but here in Dubai, we are safe and sound. We have been well-protected by the rulers of this country. If there is any missile threat, we get intimation on our mobile phones. We are also guided on the precautions we are required to take. It tells us what we need to do and where we should move in the case of any threat.


Anis Sajan

Are there any arrangements being made to evacuate and provide shelter to people in case of any missile attack in a particular area?

There are general guidelines like if you are on the road, you should go indoors. At home, people are advised to stay away from windows and glass.

What about the people who work outdoors, like at construction sites?

I myself run a real estate company, so a lot of people are working at construction sites. None of our projects have stopped. Most of the people are going to work.

At the company level, what measures have you taken for safety and livelihood support of employees?

We have around 5,000 people working with us across the Gulf region. We have given them the flexibility to work from home. As this is the holy month of Ramadan, the working hours are already shortened. Instead of 9 am to 6 pm, the working hours are reduced to 9 am to 2 pm. We called a meeting of our employees on the second day of the conflict. Out of the 5,000 employees, a few hundreds have made requests for returning to India due to the fear of war. We are providing tickets to those who want them. We have a branch in Oman, which is comparatively safer now that the other Gulf countries. We have also given our employees the flexibility to move to Oman.

How do you see the impact of the conflict on property prices in Dubai?

Around 35-40% of our customers are Indians. The Indians who live and work in the UAE and also in other Gulf nations have invested in Dubai. Obviously, they must be concerned about their investment. So far, I can assure that their investments are safe. I hope that better sense will prevail and peace will return to the region soon.

Don't you think this conflict would make a long-term dent on Dubai's growth?

The UAE, especially Dubai, has made an impressive growth in the past two decades. Now, the question is, will the UAE be able to maintain its growth momentum? It will depend on how long the war stretches. If the war stretches for say 6-8 months, it will impact the economy.

Have the supply chain disruptions led to food shortage and rise in prices of essential commodities in Dubai?

I have not noticed any shortage of food. All the supermarkets are well-stocked. Leading supermarkets like LuLu and Carrefour have given assurance that there won't be any shortage of essential items. For the next 3-4 months, I don't see any shortage of food or any other essential items. The government is keeping a strict watch on prices. So nobody can play with the prices in this critical time.

This Karnataka lad wants to fight hard but fair on tennis court

Talented Dhanush is likely to be part of the Indian squad for the qualifying event of ITF Asia 12 & Under Team Competition

HITA PRAKASH
BENGALURU, DHNS

FACT FILE

Dhanush SM Age: 12

ACHIEVEMENTS

- **National Series U-12:** Winner (2025): Doubles (Mumbai); Doubles (Hyderabad); Singles (Hyderabad); Singles (Nanded); Singles & Doubles (Bengaluru);
- **Runners-up:** Singles (Hyderabad).
- **2026:** Singles (runner-up, Belagavi).
- **U-12 Nationals:** Doubles (winner), singles (semifinalist) in Mumbai.

When coach Suraj Bikkannavar or father Manjunath SM get busy attending phone calls after Dhanush SM secures a win on a tennis court, it isn't hard to guess them to be congratulatory in nature. Some of those messages are of appreciation for the 12-year-old's game. However, most times, the calls are also to praise the young lad for his conviction and honesty during matches.

"He is one of the players who is known for being a very good sport on the court," says Bikkannavar about his ward.

"Everybody appreciates his fairness. Because, generally, at these age group competitions players tend to make a lot of wrong calls, arguments and such negative behaviour. But Dhanush is one of the few kids who believes in fair play. That doesn't mean he isn't aggressive on the court. He is fully committed during play," offers the coach who has been training Dhanush at the Sol Sports Tennis Academy in Bengaluru since he was a four-year-old kid.

Fearless play mixed with the right attitude has enabled the right-hander to collect several trophies over the past few months. The grade six student of Ebenezer International School in Bengaluru, is currently ranked third in the boys' under-12 All India Tennis Association (AITA) ranking and is likely to be a part of the Indian squad for the ITF Asia 12 & Under Team Competition - South Asia Regional Qualifying event to be held in Kathmandu from April 11 to 18.

The surge to the top-3 in the country began when Dhanush won his first National Series U-12 doubles title in Mumbai last year in May following which he has clinched two more doubles' titles along with three singles trophies. Becoming the U-12 national doubles champion on March 7 was his latest spoil.

Ask him about his favourite win, Dhanush swiftly replies: "The National Series in Bengaluru (December 2025) where I won both the singles and doubles."

Further, the youngster assesses: "The opponent I defeated in the semifinal, I had lost to him thrice before that. But still, I made a comeback and then I won that match. And then the guy I played in the final had beaten the No. 1 guy. Then, you know, I managed to beat him. So it was good"

The maturity at such a young age is striking, perhaps inherited from the humble background that father Manjunath (a kabaddi played turned tennis coach) and mother Kavitha (a primary school teacher) from the village Sankapura in Madhugiri taluk of Tumakuru embody.

"Of course, I want to win big tournaments. Even if I lose, I never want to give easy points and the opponents have to win by earning them from me," says Dhanush who admires Novak Djokovic for the way the 24-time Grand Slam champion carries himself both on and off the court - an attitude the young man has incorporated in his own life.

For feedback, email to dhsports@deccanherald.co.in

CRICKET

How SKY's honest conversation with wife changed his fortunes

'Had to cut down on a lot of things to get the India cap'

NEW DELHI, PTI

It was her matter-of-fact query that drove him to slog hard for a national call-up. And now that Suryakumar Yadav is a World Cup-winning captain, he can't praise his "brutally honest" wife Devisha enough for shaping the man he has become.

It was in 2018 when Devisha asked Suryakumar a simple question: "If you want to play for India, how do you plan to do it?"

Eight years since that "brutally honest conversation", Suryakumar led India to a successful T20 World Cup title defence.

"We got married in 2016 when I was still playing for KKR. Everything was going very smooth. I was playing well, enjoying and she looked at my journey and my routines till 2018 when I joined Mumbai Indians. I think we started doing things a little differently," Suryakumar recalled.

"She told me that all those who played with you in age group, a lot of them are now playing for India, what do you have in mind? I said: 'Mujhe bhi India khelna hai (I want to play for India too)'. 'Kaise kheloge' (how do you plan to do it?), she asked.

"It was a nice little conversation with her, not an argument but discussion. But yes, it was a discussion about how can you take one extra step forward in your endeavour. If I want to play for India and want to win games for India, how do I do it?" the 35-year-old revealed his career-changing tete-a-tete with the wife.

Once a decision about taking that extra step towards realising the ultimate goal was taken, some hard life choices were also on cards and as a couple Suryakumar and Devisha walked that path.

"We had to cut down on a lot of things -- from diet, to friends circles to weekends, rest on Saturday-Sunday, Monday to Friday work schedule, so we set the ball rolling and in 2018, I had a very good IPL season (512 runs) and also domestic cricket," he said.

"That year, I got a chance to open for Mumbai Indians and I got runs too, Come 2019 and 2020, we kept doing the same thing and I was in a different mood. She saw that he has started enjoying even more, 2020 was even better (480 runs as finisher) and then in 2021 I got picked for India," Suryakumar added.

The amiable skipper said Devisha remained behind the scenes to be his pillar of strength.

Apologised to Mitchell: SKY

India's T20 skipper Suryakumar Yadav has revealed that he personally apologised to New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell after he was hit by an Arshdeep Singh throw during the recent World Cup final as he wanted to set an example of good leadership, reports PTI from New Delhi.

"Heat of the moment mein kabhi kabhi ho jaata hai (It happens in the heat of the moment sometimes). So I went and told him (Mitchell) the same thing, if Arshdeep did it deliberately, then I am sorry. And even if he did not do it deliberately, I am sorry," he revealed.

Devisha's candid talk with her husband Suryakumar Yadav is what ignited the passion inside him to work hard towards earning the coveted India cap. PTI

Iran 'negotiating' to move US World Cup games to Mexico

MEXICO CITY, AFP: Iran's football federation is "negotiating" with FIFA to relocate the country's first-round matches at the World Cup to Mexico from the United States, citing the conflict in the Middle East, Iran's embassy in Mexico said Monday.

Iran's participation at this summer's finals in the United States, Canada and Mexico has been thrown into doubt since the war began late last month.

"When (US President Donald) Trump has explicitly stated that he cannot ensure the security of the Iranian national team, we will certainly not travel to America," Iranian football chief Mehdi Taj said in remarks posted on the embassy's X account. "We are currently negotiating with FIFA to hold Iran's matches in the World Cup in Mexico."

Iran are scheduled to face New Zealand and Belgium in Los Angeles, followed by Egypt in Seattle.

The team's base camp for the tournament is currently slated to be located in Tucson, Arizona.

Abolfazl Pasandideh, Iran's ambassador to Mexico, on Monday denounced "the US government's lack of cooperation regarding visa issuance and the provision of logistical support" for the Iranian delegation ahead of the World Cup, in a statement published on the embassy's website.

Meenakshi in Asian squad

NEW DELHI, PTI

Overcoming "self doubts", Meenakshi Goyat shocked Antim Panghal to book her place in the Indian women's team for the next month's Asian Championships, handing the two-time World Championship medallist a rare defeat at home.

Having lost to Antim three times in the trials before, Meenakshi put up a display of solid defence, eking out an impressive 'win by fall' after leading 6-2 against the Asian Games bronze medal winner, who has literally owned the 53kg weight category since departure of iconic Vinesh Phogat.

Meenakshi Goyat

Meenakshi often had Antim in a head lock position, never allowing her to play to her strength -- aggressive and attacking game. Antim went for a double leg attack in the beginning but Meenakshi denied her fancy rival and even created a position from where she pushed for a 'pin'.

Meenakshi executed a take down to go on board while Antim retaliated with a point. The 21-year-old then attempted single leg attacks but Meenakshi stayed solid in her defence. With a push-out point Antim made it 2-2.

In the second period, Meenakshi effected consecutive take down moves to go up 6-2. With nine seconds to go, Meenakshi managed to push Antim on the mat with a solid grip and succeeded in pinning the three-time Asian Championship medallist.

In utter disbelief, Antim did not get up, staying on the mat on her back. Meenakshi, who could not stop smiling, came and offered a hand to her superior rival.

Vyasa clinches Onnu Onnu Onnu Plate

HYDERABAD RESULTS

G Sandeep-trained Vyasa, ridden by Ashhad Asbar, won the upper division of the Onnu Onnu Onnu Plate, the feature event of the Hyderabad races on Tuesday.

1. Narayanpet Plate (Div I) - 1100M: Diligence (Cyrus S Poonawalla) Kuldeep Singh 1; Red Hot Punch (Ajeeth Kumar) 2; Fox Worth (Sai Kumar) 3; La Quinta (Suraj Narredu) 4; Not Run: Marissa. Wb: 1-1/4, Hd, 1L. T: 1:05.93. TB: Laxman Singh: La Quinta.

2. Flirting Vision Plate - 1200M: NRI Range (Ravinder Reddy) Afroz Khan 1; Knotty Senorita (Sai Kumar) 2; Dream To Fly (Naresh) 3; Smart Boy (BR Kumar) 4; Wb: 1, 6-1/2, 2L.T: 1:12.87. TB: Srinivas Reddy. Fav: Knotty Senorita.

3. Onnu Onnu Onnu Plate (Div I) - 1400M: Vyasa (GV Reddy) Ashhad Asbar 1; Lucky Zone (Ajeeth Kumar) 2; Pacific Heights (Ajay Kumar) 3; Leather Back (Rafique Sk) 4; Wb: 13-1/2, 1, 3/4L. T: 1:23.76. TB: Sandeep. Fav: Vyasa.

4. Mossy Bank Plate - 1400M: Bhairava (Rakesh Reddy) Ajeeth Kumar 1; Rival (Suraj Narredu) 2; Clefairy (Sai Kumar) 3; Hoping Star (Dhanu Deora) 4; Not Run: Bholi Punjaban. Wb: Shd, 3-1/4, 7-1/2L. T: 1:24.95. TB: Ananth Vatsalya. Fav: Bhairava.

5. Hyderabad Plate - 1100M: Knotty Circuit (K Kamesh) Sai Kumar 1; Divine Tiger (Ajeeth Kumar) 2; Fugo (Trevor Patel) 3; Anemara (BR Kumarj) 4; Wb: 1-1/2, 2-1/2, 1/2L. T: 1:05.91. TB: Imran Khan. Fav: Knotty Circuit.

6. Onnu Onnu Onnu Plate (Div II) - 1400M: Northern Waves (Narender Reddy) Suraj Narredu 1; Cherie Chevalier (Antony Raj) 2; Secret Saint (Trevor Patel) 3; Arabeska (Akshay Kumar) 4; Wb: 1-1/4, 3-1/2, 4L. T: 1:24.47. TB: Shashikanth. Fav: Northern Waves.

7. Narayanpet Plate (Div II) - 1100M: Authoritarian (Cyrus Palia) Ajay Kumar 1; Ek (Afroz Khan) 2; My Honey (Kuldeep Singh) 3; Catchme If You Can (Dhanu Deora) 4; Wb: 2, 2-1.2, 6-3/4L. T: 1:05.75. TB: Laxman Singh. Fav: Authoritarian.

Bengaluru dividends

I race: Rs 43w; 13, 16, 61p; Fc: Rs 413; Q: Rs 166; Shp: Rs 42; Thp: Rs 135; Tri: Rs 32,365 & 13,870; Ex: Rs 23,211 & 3,315.

II race: Rs 27w; 14, 15, 16p; Fc: Rs 143; Q: Rs 54; Shp: Rs 39; Thp: Rs 48; Tri: Rs 150 & 73; Ex: Rs 681 & 613.

III race: Rs 16w; 12, 23, 32p; Fc: Rs 113; Q: Rs 81; Shp: Rs 72; Thp: Rs 67; Tri: Rs 982 & 460; Ex: Rs 7,158 & 2,629.

IV race: Rs 17w; 10, 16, 18p; Fc: Rs 32; Q: Rs 19; Shp: Rs 30; Thp: Rs; 42; Tri: Rs 62 & 60; Ex: Rs 338 & 198.

V race: Rs 26w; 10, 19, 13p; Fc: Rs 191; Q: Rs 70; Shp: Rs 46; Thp: Rs 53; Tri: Rs 332 & 88; Ex: Rs 869 & 388.

VI race: Rs 15w;12, 16, 13p; Fc: Rs 49; Q: Rs 30; Shp: Rs 33; Thp: Rs 38; Tri: Rs 95 & 37; Ex: Rs 167 & 73.

VII race: Rs 16w; 10, 15, 24p; Fc: Rs 80; Q: Rs 52; Shp: Rs 52; Thp: Rs 53; Tri: Rs 198 & 80; Ex: Rs 1,059 & 476.

Jackpot: Rs 382 (783). **Runner-up:** Rs 93 (1376). **I treble:** Rs 121 (407). **II treble:** Rs 105 (819).

Hockey WC: India, Pak in same group

LAUSANNE, PTI

The Indian men's team has been drawn alongside arch-rivals Pakistan, strong contenders England and Wales in the group stage of the FIH Hockey World Cup to be co-hosted by the Netherlands and Belgium later this year.

During the draw ceremony held here on Tuesday at the iconic Wagener Stadium in Amsterdam, the Indian women's team was placed alongside China, England and South Africa in the prestigious tournament, scheduled to be held from August 15 to 30.

Both the Indian men's and women's teams, placed in Pool D in their respective categories, will play their matches in the Netherlands, according to the International Hockey Federation (FIH), which added that the full match schedule will be announced on Wednesday.

Germany, the reigning men's champions who clinched their third World Cup title in 2023 in Bhubaneswar by defeating Belgium, have been placed in Pool B alongside Belgium, France and Malaysia.

FIH president Tayyab Ikram said he hoped the tournament would help foster peace at times "when our world is torn apart by conflict". "Today's draw marks another major milestone on the road to the most prestigious FIH event, the FIH Hockey World Cup. The upcoming edition, for both women and men, co-hosted by two hockey powerhouses, promises to be a resounding success."

THE POOLS

- **Men: Pool A: Netherlands, Argentina, New Zealand, Japan (playing in the Netherlands).**
- Pool B: Belgium, Germany, France, Malaysia (playing in Belgium)
- **Pool C: Australia, Spain, Ireland, South Africa (playing in Belgium)**
- Pool D: England, India, Pakistan, Wales (playing in the Netherlands)
- **Women: Pool A: Netherlands, Australia, Chile, Japan (playing in the Netherlands).**
- Pool B: Argentina, Germany, USA, Scotland (playing in Belgium)
- **Pool C: Belgium, Spain, New Zealand, Ireland (playing in Belgium)**
- Pool D: China, England, India, South Africa (playing in the Netherlands).

Ashwa Vedha for feature

DELHI SELECTIONS

S Nawab-trained Ashwa Vedha, to be ridden by G Vivek, is fancied to win the Warrior Sprint Plate, the feature event of the Delhi races on Wednesday. The first race starts at 2:45 pm.

1. Storm Chaser Plate - 1600M: Poly Czar 1, Personal 2.

2. Shivneri Plate - 1400M: Golden Sun 1, Ashwa Kohima 2, Rinku Romeo 3.

3. Mighty Run Plate - 1400M: Ashwa Changez 1, Insta Millionaire 2, Senor 3.

4. Warrior Sprint Plate - 1100M: Ashwa Vedha 1, Kenaf 2, Hukamori 3.

5. Force One Plate - 1100M: Miss Boost 1, Weronika 2, Sir Mor 3.

6. Iron Hoof Plate - 1100M: Ashwa Sultan 1, Master Multitude 2, Big Daddy 3.

Day's best: Ashwa Changez. **Jackpot:** 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6. **Treble:** 4, 5 & 6.

TOWN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL CHITTAGUPPA DIST. BIDAR

No:TMC/SWM/WORKS/CR- /2025-26 /580 Dated: 17.03.2026

TENDER NOTIFCATION

1) Name of work (DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT55351/CALL-2), (DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT55352/CALL-2), (DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT55354/CALL-2, 2) Estimated cost As per KPPP Portal, 3) Eligibility of Agency / Consultant As per KPPP Portal 4) EMD amount As per KPPP Portal, 5) Last date for submission of tender **06.04.2026 upto 04.30 PM,** 6) Technical bid opening **07.04.2026 at 5:00 PM,** 7) Address for communication Chief Officer, Town Municipal Council, Chitguppa, Pin code 585412, Email : itstaff _ ulb_ Chittguppa@yahoo.com 08483-277536 & 277122, 8) Website www. kppp. karnataka.gov.in

Sd/- Chief Officer,
Town Municipal Council, Chitguppa,

DIPR/Bidar/362/KSMC&A/2025-26

THE KARNATAKA STATE CO-OPERATIVE APEX BANK LTD
[Scheduled Bank]
"UTHUNGA", No.1, Pampamahakavi Road, Chamarajpet, Bengalur- 560 018
Telephone No. 080-22976600, 26983700, 26983722, E-mail: admin@karnatakaapex.bank.in

No:CEO/ADMN/ENG/e-Tenders/4245/2025-26 Dated 16.03.2026

SHORT TERM E-TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through Electronic Portal only)

The Karnataka State Co-operative Apex Bank Ltd., Bengaluru, invites item-wise rate tender (two cover system) from the eligible and reputed Registered Interior Decorators/Contractors, who have executed the same magnitude and nature of works in State/Central Govt./Commercial/Scheduled Banks. The details of interior works under e-Tender Notification can be downloaded at **www.tenderwizard.com/etenders.**

Name of Work : Interior & Electrical Allied works at proposed B.T.M. Layout Branch.
Amount put to Tender Rs.31,96,991/- + 18% GST
EMD Amount - Rs.64,000/-.

SHORT TERM E-TENDER NOTIFICATION
CALENDER OF EVENTS

1	Date and time for commencement of downloading of e-Tender	18.03.2026 @ 3.30 PM onwards
2	Last date and time for online submission of e-Tender	01.04.2026 upto 5.30 PM
3	Period of Completion	45 Days (Including Monsoon)
4	Opening of Technical Bid	02.04.2026 @ 11.30 AM onwards
5	Opening of Commercial Bid	06.04.2026 @ 11.30 AM onwards

For further details contact KEONICS – e-Procurement Help Desk: Ph: 080-40482100 / 9632699768 regarding e-Tender processing fees, Registration charges in website www.tenderwizard.com/etenders or Administration Section of KSC Apex Bank Ltd., Chamarajpet, Bengaluru during office hours.

Note: Bank has got all the rights to reject any or all the above tender bids at its discretion without giving any reasons.

Sd/-
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
K.S.C APEX BANK LTD., BENGALURU

JAAP-PG 2026
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Institutions of National Importance under the SPA Act 2014 established by
Ministry of Education, Government of India
No. SPAB/RGO/Advt./2026/13 Date: 18/03/2026
Joint Admission for Architecture and Planning – Post Graduate (JAAP-PG) 2026
Applications are invited for admission to various postgraduate degree courses at three Institutions, namely; **School of Planning and Architecture; New Delhi, School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal and School of Planning and Architecture, Vijayawada,** for the Academic Session 2026-27. Please visit the respective Institute's website spa.ac.in, spabhopal.ac.in & spav.ac.in for more details. Contact number of School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal Phone 0755-2526802, 819, 821 & 822 Extn.
Registrar, SPA Bhopal

BENGALURU SOUTH CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer, Jayanagar Division,
No.44, 18th Main Road, 39th Cross,
Jayanagar 4th 'T' Block, Bengaluru-560041.
No:EE/BSCC/JN/TEND/05/2025-26 Date: 16.03.2026
Invitation for Tender (IFT) (Service Tender)
(Two Cover System) (Only through KPP Portal)
website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in
The Executive Engineer, Jayanagar Division, BSCC, Bengaluru invites bids for the following services from reputed Service Provider for the below work.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work / Category
1.	Providing Security Services to All BBMP Office Buildings in Jayanagara Constituency **(Others).** **Approx. Amount put to tender (₹ in Lakhs) : 75.00, EMD (in ₹) 1,50,000/-.**
2.	Providing Security Services to Jayanagara Shopping Complex Buildings Jayanagara Constituency **(Others).** **Approx. Amount put to tender (₹ in Lakhs) : 35.00, EMD (in ₹) 70,000/-.**
3.	Providing House Keeping Services to All BBMP Office Buildings in Jayanagara Constituency **(Others).** **Approx. Amount put to tender (₹ in Lakhs) : 25.00, EMD (in ₹) 50,000/-.**
4.	Providing House Keeping Services to Jayanagara Shopping Complex Buildings in Jayanagara Constituency **(Others).** **Approx. Amount put to tender (₹ in Lakhs) : 30.00, EMD (in ₹) 60,000/-.**

Calendar of Events: (1) Last Date and Time for uploading tenders in KPP Portal on **30.03.2026 upto 4:00 p.m. (2)** Date and Time of Opening Technical Bid in the KPP Portal on **01.04.2026 at 4:05 p.m. (3)** Date and Time of Opening Financial Bid in the KPP Portal on **02.04.2026 at 4:05 p.m.** after technical bid approval.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Jayanagar Division, BSCC.

HALSC win thriller against AGORC

BENGALURU, DHNS: In a closely fought contest, HAL Sports Club's combined effort trumped AGO Recreation Club's individual brilliances during their narrow three-run win in the KSCA Group II, Division I league cum knockout tournament here.

LOCAL CRICKET

AGORC's Manoj Bhandage produced a brilliant all-round show (4/23 & 29) while his team-mate Arjun Hoysala struck the lone half-century (51) of the match, but their efforts paled in front of HAL SC's united front.

Batting first, Monish Reddy (34) was the top-scorer for HAL SC as Bhandage and Arjun Gowda (3/31) shone with the ball to bowl out their opponents to 151 in 18.4 overs.

In reply, Hoysala kept AGORC well on track for a win with a 34-ball 51 even as Bhandage added a handy cameo. However, HAL's bowling unit -- Monish Reddy (2/27), Rahul Prasanna (2/33) and Nathan D'Mello (2/25) -- joined forces to end AGO RC's charge just short of the finish line.

Brief scores: HAL Sports Club: 151 all out in 18.4 overs (Sumukha Prasad S 30, Gagandeep K 26, Monish Reddy 34; Arjun N Gowda 3-31, MS Bhandage 4-23) bt AGO Recreation Club: 148/8 in 20 overs (Arjun Hoysala A 51, MS Bhandage 29; Monish Reddy 2-27, Rahul Prasanna 2-33, Nathan D'Mello 2-25).
DELL Cricket Club: 171/6 in 20 overs (Vinay Radha S 32, Sachin R Gankal 30, Dhanu 32 n.o.; Suresh Karani 2-31) lt to Central Excise & Customs: 172/6 in 19.3 overs (Rohan RR 54, Samarth R 43, Thippa Reddy 35 n.o.; Rajesh Ayyakkannu 2-27, Aevant P Khothari 2-29).

Conway steers Kiwis to victory over Proteas

HAMILTON, AFP: Devon Conway blasted a half-century before New Zealand skittled South Africa cheaply to win the second Twenty20 international by 68 runs Tuesday and level the five-match series 1-1.

Conway's 60 off 49 balls set the home side up for a competitive 175-6 after being sent in to bat at Hamilton's Seddon Park.

The Proteas lost wickets regularly to be dismissed for 107 off 15.3 overs, with pace bowlers Ben Sears and Lockie Ferguson snaring three wickets each.

Brief scores: New Zealand: 175/6 in 20 overs (Devon Conway 60, Josh Clarkson 26; Wiaan Mulder 2-14) bt South Africa: 107 all out 15.3 overs (George Linde 33; Lockie Ferguson 3-16, Ben Sears 3-14, Mitchell Santner 2-19). **Result:** NZ won by 68 runs. **PoM:** Devon Conway. **5-match T20I series:** Tied at 1-1. **Third T20I:** March 20 (Auckland).

IPL

The tragic stampede, impending sale of franchise form the backdrop of champions' campaign

Bowling worries return as RCB eye title defence

SIDNEY KIRAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

The tragic stampede that claimed the lives of 11 fans during their maiden victory celebrations last June and the future ownership of the franchise are set to loom large on Royal Challengers Bengaluru's campaign when they begin their title defence on March 28, the day IPL-19 kicks off.

10 days to go

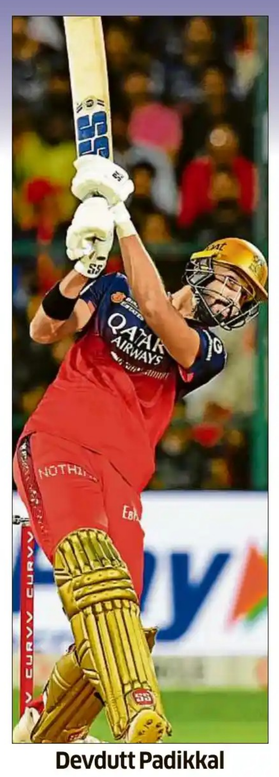
After 17 seasons of heartbreak and heavy ridicule, the Royal Challengers finally laid their hands on the coveted trophy on an emotional June 3 night at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, where the talismanic Virat Kohli broke down and the rest of the contingent had tears of joy flowing like a river. Many fans at the venue too couldn't hide their emotions while the ones in Bengaluru hit the roads post 11.00 pm to celebrate a day they'd been waiting for all their lives.

A massive crowd even turned up for the hastily arranged victory celebrations the next day, which was attended by the who's who from the state government too. Sadly, the most special day in the history of the franchise turned into one of the most tragic in Indian sports, as 11 fans lost their lives and several got injured, which brought top-flight cricketing operations at the Chinnaswamy Stadium to a complete halt.

The proactive approach by the KSCA finally yielded results with the State government clearing decks to conduct matches at the iconic venue.

In the interim, United Spirits Limited, a subsidiary of Diageo that owns RCB, put the franchise up for sale in November, and the England-based company is hoping to finalise a buyer by the end of this month.

Amidst this backdrop, RCB will be looking to defend the crown, although they can look forward to the season with confidence as their core is very much intact. On the batting front, they have the young Devdutt Padikkal, who has been in the form of his life across formats in recent months, the talismanic Kohli, captain courageous Rajat Patidar, and dangerous Englishman Phil Salt.


Devdutt Padikkal

> I thought the senior player group were amazing in the lead up to those crucial games. Their confidence shone through their influence on the people around them I think was really positive, strong and confident.
> **ANDY FLOWER**
> Head Coach

To bolster the top order, the think tank procured all-rounder Venkatesh Iyer, who will be hungry for a strong season following a blip last year, and young Englishman Jacob Bethell. The southpaw gave a glimpse of his exceptional talent in the the just-concluded T20 World Cup, and if he gets regular starts, he could be a game-changer for RCB. In essence, RCB have a good mix of youth, experience and firepower in their top and middle order.

Royal Challengers have their bases covered in the finishing department too, with Jitesh Sharma, Tim David, and Romario Shepherd all capable of playing those game-changing cameos. All three displayed that last season, and Jitesh, who sadly missed out on a spot in the Indian team for the T20 World Cup, will be gearing up to make a name for himself.

If there's an area of concern, it's the bowling department. Australian Josh Hazlewood, an integral member in RCB's triumph, is set to miss the early part of the season as he recovers from an injury, while one wonders what frame of mind Yash Dayal will be in following his legal troubles over the last year. That leaves veterans Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Jacob Duffy to lead the pace attack, which appears lacking in depth.

If RCB wish to stay champions, a lot will depend on their batting might as bowling, their Achilles Heel for a long time, resurfaces again.

Squad: Rajat Patidar (capt), Devdutt Padikkal, Virat Kohli, Phil Salt (wk), Jitesh Sharma (wk), Jordan Cox (wk), Krunal Pandya, Swapnil Singh, Tim David, Romario Shepherd, Jacob Bethell, Venkatesh Iyer, Satvik Deswal, Mangesh Yadav, Vicky Ostwal, Vihaan Malhotra, Kanishk Chouhan, Josh Hazlewood, Rasikh Dar, Suyash Sharma, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Nuwan Thushara, Abhinandan Singh, Jacob Duffy, Yash Dayal.

Best finish: Champions (2025)

Royal Challengers Bengaluru's captain Rajat Patidar (right) and Virat Kohli will be crucial to the team's fortunes this season.

Bhagirathi Group champions

BENGALURU, DHNS: Riding Aaron K Joseph's all-round show and Aadharsh SJ's blistering half-century, Bhagirathi Group beat Infosys Cricket Club by 36 runs to emerge champions of the KSCA Group II - II Division league cum knockout tournament at the IAF Ground here.

LOCAL CRICKET

After winning the toss, Infosys inserted Bhagirathi Group to bat first. However, the decision did not pay dividends as openers Aadharsh (63 off 36) and Aaron (40 off 35) stitched a 97-run stand to lay the perfect platform for a good total.

Aarav Mahesh (28) added to the tally as Bhagirathi Group posted 188/7 in 20 overs. Varun Kumar HC (3/28) was the pick of the bowlers for Infosys.

Chasing 189 for victory, Infosys found the going tough and managed just 152/9 in 20 overs. Aaron (3/22) and M Kranthi Kumar (2/27) shared five wickets between them.

Brief scores: AT IAF: Bhagirathi Group: 188/7 in 20 overs (Aadharsh SJ 63, Aaron K Joseph 40, Aarav Mahesh 28; Vineeth B 2-31, Varun Kumar HC 3-28) bt Infosys Cricket Club: 152/9 in 20 overs (Sachin Rajput 25, Swaroop SH 25, Pradyumna Srivatsa 58, Melu Kranthi Kumar 2-27, Aaron K Joseph 3-22).

Bhagirathi Group, winners of the KSCA Group II - Division II tournament. SITTING (from left): Aadarsh Prajwal, Azam, M Kranthi Kumar, Mahesh Hariharan, Neil Michael Joseph, Shaun Tristan Joseph, Santosh Singh Thakur. STANDING (from left): Aadharsh SJ, Anjinappa, Sunil Kumar, Aarav Mahesh, Ambresh K, Aaron K Joseph, Tanish Mahesh.

Dhoni must bat no lower than six: ABD

NEW DELHI, PTI

In a blunt assessment, South African batting legend AB de Villiers stated on Tuesday that MS Dhoni must bat no lower than number six in the upcoming IPL, as coming in at eight or nine does not do justice to his presence.

Dhoni, 44, will turn out for his franchise Chennai Super Kings in the IPL starting March 28, and De Villiers urged the talisman to change his trend of batting way down the order in recent years. Touching upon Dhoni's role in the CSK setup this IPL season, De Villiers told JioHotstar, "It's very tricky and not straightforward. Brands are built over years, and CSK have built this empire over many years with this MS Dhoni figure that's always been there. When you mention CSK, you immediately think of Dhoni.

"I feel that in the last few years, his role has purely been about keeping that brand as strong as possible. That's why I don't see a role for him batting at eight or nine and not really doing enough, like last season.

"We know he can be impactful with the bat, but if he's batting that low and not captaining, it feels like he's almost just making up for a spot for the wrong reasons. There's still a place for him, but he needs to bat higher, at least at six, maybe even at five or four at times."

"Sanju Samson is the right guy to take over, and credit to Dhoni because he's hung around, waiting for the right person to come."

Karnataka women's team clinches bronze

BENGALURU, DHNS: Karnataka women's team settled for bronze after going down to Reserve Bank of India in the semifinals of the Senior National Table Tennis Championships in Indore on Monday.

RBI's Diya Chitale and Ayhika Mukherjee scored straight-game wins over Kushi Viswanath and Tanishka Kalbhairav, respectively, to hand RBI the early momentum.

Trupti Purohit registered Karnataka's solitary win by beating Nikhat Banu to make it 2-1. Diya, then, beat Tanishka to seal it for RBI.

Women: Semifinal: Reserve Bank of India bt Karnataka 3-1 (Diya Chitale bt Kushi Viswanath 11-6, 11-5, 11-8; Ayhika Mukherjee bt Tanishka Kalbhairav 11-5, 11-4, 11-7; Nikhat Banu lt to Trupti Purohit 16-18, 16-14, 11-8, 8-11, 7-11; Diya bt Tanishka 11-5, 10-12, 11-8, 11-6).

Karnataka women's team won bronze at the Senior National Table Tennis Championships in Indore.

Madan, Thanu star in RBI's win

BENGALURU, DHNS: Madan TD and Thanu Nanjappa scored a hat-trick each as Reserve Bank of India thrashed Dhyanchand Hockey Club, Tumkur 9-0 in the KSHA B Division Hockey League Championship here on Tuesday.

Varun Ganapathi scored a brace while Sidanth Uthappa found the back of the net once.

Result: Reserve Bank of India: 9 (Madan TD 3rd, 48th, 50th, Thanu Nanjappa 4th, 16th, 22nd, Varun Ganapathi 40th, 46th, Sidanth Uthappa 43rd) bt Dhyanchand Hockey Club, Tumkur: 0.

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